



Recommendation 1837 (2008)¹

The fight against harm to the environment in the Black Sea

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Black Sea is an area of crucial importance for Europe, considering its geographical location and its socio-economic, cultural and environmental attributes. In fact, it is located at the frontiers of both geographical Europe (Council of Europe) and the European Union, and represents a bridge between different cultures and religions.
2. The Black Sea was once one of Europe's most bountiful fisheries. Industrialisation and the regional population explosion have caused overfishing, eutrophication and the flow of chemical and radioactive poisons into the sea. Now this body of water, once an important source of food and recreation, is in danger of becoming an unprecedented ecological disaster.
3. This is why co-operation can and must be increased among the riparian states at national, regional and local levels to combat harm to the environment and improve the well-being of the inhabitants of these countries.
4. The Parliamentary Assembly recalls that there are already a number of co-operation structures in the Black Sea region, some of them dealing with fields extending far beyond that of the environment. At governmental level we might mention the Black Sea Economic Co-operation (BSEC), which also has a parliamentary dimension: the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation (PABSEC), the Energy Community of South-East Europe, the Black Sea Regional Energy Centre (BSREC), the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (Black Sea Commission), and so on, and at regional level the Balkan and Black Sea Regional Commission, whose objective is to encourage dialogue and co-operation between sub-state spheres of government.
5. The Assembly regrets, however, that the Bucharest Declaration, signed in 1985 by the countries through which the Danube flows and which is geared to measuring and controlling the level of pollution in this waterway, has had no practical impact, despite its reinforcement in 1994.
6. The Assembly recalls that the six states bordering the Black Sea (Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine) have signed and ratified the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (Bucharest, 1992), thus providing the framework for more effective monitoring of pollution, and the restoration and conservation of the marine resources.
7. The Assembly recalls also that the European Union is currently developing an initiative known as the Black Sea Synergy as part of its European Neighbourhood Policy. This initiative concerns, among other things, the environment, maritime policy and fisheries, and relies particularly on transfrontier co-operation.
8. The Assembly notes that the sources of the Black Sea's environmental problems are multiple. The rivers that drain into the Black Sea bring with them heavy metals, synthetic organic compounds, hydrocarbons, nutrients, untreated sewage and radionuclides from Chernobyl. The dams on these rivers, as well as the need for fresh water for agriculture and domestic purposes, have drastically reduced the amount of fresh water flowing into the sea, which compounds the existing problems and alters the sea's salinity. Some

1. *Assembly debate* on 23 June 2008 (20th Sitting) (see [Doc. 11632](#), report of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, rapporteur: Mr Mironescu). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 23 June 2008 (20th Sitting).



seaside cities are an additional source of untreated sewage, while their ports are a large source of both oil pollution and the importation of non-native species. Overexploitation of the Black Sea's fisheries has led to the commercial extinction of 21 of the sea's 26 species of fish.

9. The Assembly notes that the Danube River alone discharges up to 280 tonnes of cadmium, 60 tonnes of mercury, 900 tonnes of copper, 4 500 tonnes of lead, 6 000 tonnes of zinc, 1 000 tonnes of chromium and 50 000 tonnes of hydrocarbons annually. The other main rivers that flow into the Black Sea (the Dnieper, Dniester, Don, Kuban, Yuzhnyy and Belaya) deposit another 87 tonnes of cadmium, 1 500 tonnes of copper, 825 tonnes of lead and 2 600 tonnes of zinc annually. These rivers are also the source of huge amounts of nitrates and phosphorus, which cause increased algal and plankton blooms, a reduction of dissolved oxygen concentrations and severe reductions in fish stocks, leading to changes in the food chain.

10. The Assembly therefore considers that the Council of Europe must take steps to reinforce co-operation in the Black Sea region at national, local and regional level, given that all the riparian countries are member states of the Organisation.

11. In this connection, it welcomes the initiative of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe to set up a new euroregion in the Black Sea, following the example of the Adriatic Euroregion. Such a body would, among other things, promote co-operation among the Black Sea countries at local and regional level, help foster sustainable development, reinforce local authorities' management capacities and encourage exchanges of experience among local and regional authorities in order to implement joint projects.

12. The Assembly consequently requests the Committee of Ministers to invite the relevant member states of the Council of Europe to:

12.1. encourage, and if possible to help by financial means, the towns on the shores of the Black Sea to modernise their sewage systems;

12.2. encourage Black Sea ports to modernise their harbour installations in order to drastically reduce hydrocarbon pollution from these installations;

12.3. improve co-operation and integration in the field of maritime surveillance with a view to improving pollution control on the main maritime routes;

12.4. ensure drastic reductions in the level of pollution of the rivers and estuaries draining into the Black Sea;

12.5. refrain from activities which endanger the environment of the protected spaces around the Black Sea and cease the ongoing ones, in particular the Danube-Black Sea Navigation Route Project in the Ukrainian part of the Danube Delta.

12.6. promote healthy tourism around the Black Sea area, with full respect for the natural heritage;

12.7. encourage increased use of renewable energy sources such as solar, wind and tidal energies in the Black Sea region;

12.8. support local authorities in their efforts aimed at marine management in accordance with the principle of sustainable development, as well as in their transfrontier co-operation projects;

12.9. improve supervision of the fishing industry and organise concerted action to help rebuild depleted fish stocks;

12.10. reinforce implementation of environmental agreements in the region and introduce mandatory environmental assessments for all regional projects;

12.11. instigate any necessary legislative reforms to ensure productive co-operation at regional level and, in this context, actively promote the creation of a Black Sea Euroregion.