

Memorandum of Understanding between the International Commission for the Protection of the Black Sea (ICPBS) and the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) on common strategic goals

The 'International Commission for the Protection of the Black Sea (ICPBS)' was established to implement the 'Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution'.

This Convention is a 'shoreline convention', i.e. it itself holds no power over the inland activities of the States within the hydrographic drainage area discharging to the overall Black Sea (Black Sea proper, Sea of Azov).

The 'International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR)' was established to implement the 'Convention on Cooperation for the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Danube River'. This Convention is a 'hydrographic basin convention', i.e. it itself holds power over the transboundary impact via the drainage network of the River Danube Basin (valid only for Contracting Parties to this Convention).

This Memorandum of Understanding becomes effective as soon as it has been agreed upon in the respective Meetings of both Commissions mentioned and an exchange of letters has taken place. It loses its effectiveness as soon as one of both the International Commissions mentioned notifies the other.

This Memorandum of Understanding constitutes a framework for implementing common strategic goals. Representatives of the ICPBS and the ICPDR with the assistance of UNDP/GEF and UNEP set up on December 8 and 9, 1997, a Joint Ad-hoc Technical Working Group ('the Group') in a Meeting at Constanta, Romania. The following elements of this Memorandum of Understanding correspond with the results of 'the Group':

- For the purpose of this Memorandum, the term 'overall Black Sea' encompasses the Black Sea proper and the Sea of Azov as water bodies receiving inputs via inland waters. Both the Black Sea proper and the Sea of Azov are in regard to their ecology and their response to discharged pollution completely different water bodies and their ecosystems are to be considered separately.
- The term 'wider' Black Sea Basin' refers to the basin determined by the hydrographic boundary of all inland waters discharging to the overall Black Sea
- The results of the studies on the 'Ecological Indicators of Pollution in the Black Sea' carried out in the frame of the activities of the Joint Ad-hoc Working Group, have given evidence of recovery in Black Sea ecosystems. However, the ecological status of the 1960s – which is deemed to be the goal to aim for – is not yet reached.
- There is in general agreement that the status of the ecosystems of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov is largely affected by nutrients discharged within the wider Black Sea

Basin, and to a large extent by the riverine input into the overall Black Sea. Information of a possible role of other sources of pollution and their impacts on Black Sea ecosystems was not yet available.

- The size of the pollution loads reaching the overall Black Sea (dispersion both in time and in space for the Black Sea proper and the Sea of Azov) are either not known, or information is missing on the comparability of the data available.
- ‘The Group’ was aware of the decline of the economic activities in the countries in transition, the possible impact of them on the discharge of pollution, and the reversal of such a trend in case of future economic development (concerning in particular agricultural and industrial activities).
- The data available to ‘the Group’ to undertake its assessment ended at best with values for the year 1997.

In order to contribute to safeguard the Black Sea from a further deterioration of the status of its ecosystems the ‘Commission for the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution’ and the ‘Commission for the Protection and Sustainable Use of the Danube River’ agree to the following common goals:

- *The long-term goal in the wider Black Sea Basin is to take measures to reduce the loads of nutrients and hazardous substances discharged to such levels necessary to permit Black Sea ecosystems to recover to conditions similar to those observed in the 1960s.*
- *As an intermediate goal, urgent measures should be taken in the wider Black Sea Basin in order to avoid that the loads of nutrients and hazardous substances discharged into the Seas exceed those that existed in the mid 1990s. (These discharges are only incompletely known.)*
- *The inputs of nutrients and hazardous substances into both receiving Seas (Black Sea proper and Sea of Azov) have to be assessed in a comparable way. To this very end a common Analytical Quality Assurance (AQA) system and a thorough discussion about the necessary monitoring approach, including the sampling procedures, has to be set up and agreed upon between the ICPBS and the ICPDR..*
- *The ecological status of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov has to be further assessed, and the comparability of the data basis has to be further increased.*
- *Both the reported input loads as well as the assessed ecological status will have to be reported annually to both the ICPBS and the ICPDR.*
- *Strategies for economic development have to be adopted to ensure appropriate practices and measures to limit the discharge of nutrients and hazardous substances, and to rehabilitate ecosystems, which assimilate nutrients.*
- *Based on the annual reports and on the adopted strategies for the limitation of the discharge of nutrients and hazardous substances, a review shall be undertaken in 2007. It will have to focus on the further measures that may be required for meeting the long-term objective.*

The ICPDR and the ICPBS invite all other international organisations and States in the wider Black Sea Basin to support the common goals of this Memorandum of Understanding.

Signed in Brussels 26 November 2001

On behalf of the International Commission
for the Protection of the Danube (ICPDR)

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for the Protection of the Black Sea (ICPBS)

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