

ICPS newsletter®

EU Environmental policy: Looking for opportunities to cooperate

How serious is environmental pollution in Europe's maritime basins? How adequate is the policy response and how might it be made more effective through sub-regional cooperation? These and other issues were discussed during a conference called "Environmental and maritime issues in four European sea basins" that took place in Reykjavik in May 27–28

Problems are similar across all seas

During the conference, researchers and policy-makers from littoral states of the Mediterranean, Baltic, Black and Caspian Seas discussed issues dealing with sub-regional conventions and cooperation, regional boundaries and maritime security, sources of marine pollution and maintaining biodiversity.

As many presenters pointed out, environmental problems such as oil pollution and the introduction of alien species tend to be common across all four sea basins. For example, the Black Sea is exposed to loss of biodiversity as a consequence of pollution, the destruction of habitats and overexploitation of marine life over the last 40 years. The key sources of Black Sea pollution are:

- land-based (manufacturing)
- nutrients (impact of Danube River)
- marine litter
- oil pollution (increase in the amount of oil and other goods transported through the Black Sea and Turkish Straits)
- invasive species that region are easily transported from one region to another.

Iryna Makarenko, the Deputy Chief-of-Staff at the Office of the Vice Premier, thinks that new energy projects in the region pose a threat to the Black Sea environment and safety such as the Bourgas–Alexandroupolis oil pipeline, the South Stream gas pipeline and NPPs in Belene, Bulgaria, and in Turkey.

Even though these seas are under increasing man-made pressure from economic activity, the corresponding countries and sub-regional organizations

face many obstacles to implementing effective environmental strategies that might mitigate or prevent environmental pollution.

Environmental cooperation is difficult but possible

International conventions and regional policy. Coordinating environmental policy is challenging both across and within countries. Sub-regional conventions often do not include details about coastal areas that comprise both land and sea. This slows down their implementation, such as in the Mediterranean Sea basin, where there are 22 states. National objectives are also sometimes not easily integrated at the operational levels of local governments. Another problem that limits policy coordination and convergence in the Caspian Sea is the fact that the legal status of the Sea has yet to be defined and border delimitations implemented.

Cooperation between researchers and policy-makers. There is a gap between technical and political stakeholders. Practitioners have yet to find better ways to cooperate with the researchers and put ecosystem principles into practice. A good example of such cooperation in the Baltic Sea is the HELCOM (Baltic Marine Environmental Protection Commission).

Economics and environment. Many littoral countries do not follow the principles of sustainability development in practice. Despite rapid economic growth among the emerging oil-producing countries in the Caspian region, per capita GDP remains low. Thus, economic growth is often given priority over environmental preservation in many developing economies in the region. It is only the EU coastal countries that regularly use

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the Strategic Environmental Assessment approach¹, that makes it possible to integrate environmental considerations when drawing up policy.

Although it is an important littoral state on three of the four seas, Russia has not been very active in shaping environmental dialog.

External actors. Russia is an important player in all of the researched seas, as it is physically present in three and politically in all four. The Baltic Sea is a good example of regional cooperation between Russia and other countries in the region in environmental policy-making. However, Russia is not as active in shaping environmental dialog in other seas. As a major oil producer and transporter, Russia could initiate programs with other oil-producing countries in the region with the aim of preventing oil spills at sea.

The European Union is the most active player in the environmental domain in the Mediterranean, Black and Baltic Sea basins. It could become unifying force in environmental policy in all four seas. The pace of policy convergence and coordination could be increased through stronger application of the conditionality in the European Neighborhood Policy

¹ Strategic Environmental Assessment is a comprehensive process of reassessing the impact of human activity on the environment.

and its spin-offs. To overcome barriers to effective policy implementation, the EU and individual countries will also have to devise ways for stakeholders from the private sector to be more closely. ■

The conference was organized under the EU4Seas project, whose purpose is to

contribute to the analysis of sub-regional cooperation in four major European maritime basins: the Mediterranean, Baltic, Black and Caspian Seas. The EU4Seas project is being implemented by a consortium of European think-tanks and is funded the EC's 7th Framework Programme.

Working papers from the conference will be available later on the project web-site at <http://www.eu4seas.eu>. For more information, contact Project Coordinator Dana Depo by phone at (044) 484-4400 or via e-mail at dana.depo@icps.kiev.ua.

Norwegian-Ukrainian study launched into quality of municipal services in Ukraine

The International Centre for Policy Studies and the Norwegian Institute of Local and Regional Studies (NIBR) have launched a joint project to study the quality of public services at the municipal level in Ukraine. The purpose of this project "Research project on municipal service delivery management in Ukraine" is to undertake a series of applied studies into various aspects of public services that are offered by the state in Ukraine's cities

On 10–13 June, ICPS and NIBR held a joint seminar in Odesa for Ukrainian researchers on the topic, "Applied research on municipal services." The 13 participants were selected on a competitive basis. They came from the regional institutes of the National Academy of Public Administration under the Office of the President of Ukraine, the Petro Mohyla Black Sea State University, and other post-secondary institutions and think-tanks in Odesa, Mykolayiv, Kyiv, L'viv and Dnipropetrovsk.

The theoretical and practical sessions of this seminar were run by economists from the two partner organizations, ICPS and NIBR, and professionals from the State Statistics Bureau of Norway, the Association of Polish Cities, and the Association of Cities and Regions of Norway. The theoretical discussions covered such issues as:

- the content and characteristics of applied research regarding public services, based on experience in Norway and Poland;
- Norwegian and Polish practice in establishing "effectiveness networks," informal associations of cities as an instrument for analyzing the productivity and accessibility of individual services in order to

improve the quality of delivery in each individual city;

- how public services are organized, regulated and funded at the local level in Ukraine;
- how to establish and use indicators to measure the features of services and how to establish sources of data and procedures for selecting it, based on practice in Norway and Poland and the situation in Ukraine;
- how to organize and run polls among beneficiaries and providers of services, based on practice in Norway, Poland and Ukraine;
- how to analyze and work up collected data using SPSS software.

This seminar also included individual and group hands-on assignments, during the course of which the researchers established indicators to measure the features of different forms of public services, put together surveys and programs for undertaking sociological research, undertook mini-studies, analyzed their collected data using SPSS, and presented their results for discussion.

All the participating researchers showed excellent results and were given high marks by the facilitators. Their active and meaningful involvement made it possible to say that the majority of them were

prepared to undertake applied research assignments during subsequent phases of this project. ■

For more information on this project, please contact project coordinator Ihor Shevliakov by phone (044) 484- 44-00 or via mail ishevliakov@icps.kiev.ua.

ICPS becomes a partner in Europe's World

ICPS has become a partner in *Europe's World*, a highly-successful policy journal that has won for itself a global readership of over 100,000 policy-makers and analysts since its launch in 2005. *Europe's World* involves think-tanks across Europe to contribute suggestions for articles and authors. The idea behind *Europe's World* has been that Europeans need a shared forum for policy thinking and discussion, and that this common platform should have neither a national nor a political bias.

IMF uses consumer confidence

The International Centre for Policy Studies' analytical publications have gained considerable reputation among international institutions. For instance, in its reports on Ukraine, the International Monetary Fund uses the indicators of inflationary expectations that part of a regular series of polls of the consumer mood in Ukraine taken by ICPS and GfK Ukraine and published as *consumer confidence*.

icps newsletter is a bi-weekly publication of the International Centre for Policy Studies, delivered by electronic mail. To be included in the distribution list, mail your request to: marketing@icps.kiev.ua.

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