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Black Sea Commission:
developments in marine litter
management in the Black Sea Region

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Bucharest Convention



Marine Litter in the Black Sea (1)

History:

Bucharest Convention is a **Regional Sea Convention for the Black Sea** basin; signed in Bucharest in 1992 and ratified in 1994; its basic objective is to **prevent, reduce and control the pollution** in the Black Sea providing the legal framework for co-operation in this regard;

4 thematic Protocols: **LBS Protocol**; Dumping Protocol; Emergency Situations Protocol; CBD Protocol;

LBS Protocol in force, *inter alia*, sets the **obligations to control, monitor and assess pollution from land-based sources, including the riverine loads**;

Very important document is **Strategic Action Plan (SAP)** on the Protection and Rehabilitation of the Black Sea – adopted in 1996 and amended in 2009 in Sofia;

2 out of 6 countries are members to the EU, therefore, **EU environmental legislation is not legally binding**;

There is **no specific Advisory Group on Marine Litter**, but due to the cross-cutting nature of marine litter, all the rest are dealing to some extent with the ML problematics.



Marine Litter in the Black Sea (2)

- **No concrete legal instruments** dedicated specifically to the management of ML **till October, 2018 (!!!)**;
- Bucharest Convention and its Protocols contain several Articles relevant to ML;
- The Annexes to **LBS Protocol (in force), Dumping Protocol** contain **three lists of hazardous substances and matter** which include those materials which constitute plastic ML;
- The new LBS Protocol agreed upon in 2009, but which has **not yet entered into force**, includes a **clear definition of marine litter** (borrowed from UNEP);
- The latest version of BS SAP (2009) incorporated the recommendations on fighting with marine litter, and presented a **series of management targets** – **Report on implementation of BS SAP 2009 is being drafted**;



Marine Litter in the Black Sea (3)

- In 2005, the Regional Activity on Marine Litter, supported by UNEP, was launched;
- During the following 3 years the two relevant Memorandums of Understanding (**MoUs**) between the BSC Permanent Secretariat and UNEP (Nairobi) were implemented;
- 2007 **Report on Marine Litter in the Black Sea** (incl. the text of the Draft Marine Litter Action Plan for the Black Sea);
- Recommendation for **updating the BS SAP**, on methodologies, monitoring and assessment, increased public awareness on marine litter in the Black Sea;
- Partner or sub-contractor in a range of EU-funded **projects** (Advisory Board of MARLISCO, CLEANSEA, MSFD Project, PERSEUS, STAGES etc.), Berlin Conference on Marine Litter;
- **In 2015 BSC joined the UNEP Partnership on Marine Litter!!!**



Marine Litter in the Black Sea (4)

- **During its 31st BSC Regular Meeting (7-8th October, 2015):**
- **The Commission welcomed the cooperation with UNEP and, in particular, implementation of marine litter related activities under the BSC PS - UNEP MoU.**
- **The Commission took note of the proposal of Bulgaria on the draft Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Black Sea and to asked ESAS/LBS/PMA AGs to consider it and to follow the issue.**
- **The Commission agreed that further activities on the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Black Sea will be included in the BSC Work Programme for 2015/2016.**



Marine Litter in the Black Sea (5)

- In the adopted **BSIMAP 2017-2022** (October, 2016) marine litter was only mentioned in the text;
- Since December, 2016, we implement **SSFA with UNEP/MAP** with a number of activities under **Marine Litter MED project** to strengthen bilateral collaboration aimed to: 1) finalize the draft **Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter** Management in the Black Sea; 2) elaborate, further develop and finalize the **Marine Litter Monitoring Programme for the Black Sea**; 3) draft a **joint work plan between UNEP/MAP and the BSC PS**; 4) organize **annual joint meeting between both Secretariats**;
- BS SoE Report contains **Chapter on ML** in the Black Sea;



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Marine Litter in the Black Sea (6)

Draft Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Black Sea was **adopted** by the Black Sea Commission in October 2018 during its 34th Regular meeting in Istanbul, Turkey;

Draft Marine Litter Monitoring Programme for the Black Sea was not yet adopted, it is currently **being considered** by the national and international experts and is planned to be provided for adoption by BSC in the nearest future;

The mechanism of **regular bilateral cooperation** between the Secretariats was established, which is now used as an example of successful collaboration between the Regional Seas on the global level;

Three annual joint meetings between both Secretariats were held in 2017, 2018 and 2019, respectively; during these meetings joint work plans between the UNEP/MAP and the BSC PS were prepared and further successfully implemented;



Marine Litter in the Black Sea (7)

Back-to-back to the third bilateral meeting on 12-13th December, 2019 the **Regional Verification workshop** to support the establishment of the BS ML Monitoring Programme and streamline the implementation of BS RAP on ML was held in Istanbul. During the Workshop, the **best practices in Mediterranean Sea were presented** and it also served as a platform for consideration of draft Marine Litter Monitoring Guidelines and **discussion of implementation of BS RAP on ML;**

BSC also joined the efforts of UNEP/MAP on the global level, within the work of **UNEP Global Group on Indicators**, in drafting the **World Ocean Assessment Report II**, within activities of Sustainable Ocean Initiative (**SOI**); implementation of European Union' Marine Strategy Framework Directive and reaching the Good Environmental Status of marine waters; circular economy and ecosystem services; agreements under relevant global and regional organizations covering our seas (i.e. General Fisheries Commission for Mediterranean (**GFCM**) and **ACCOBAMS** Agreement on Conservation of Cetaceans in Mediterranean and the Black Sea);

During the Regional Verification workshop the participants considered the Draft Guidelines on Monitoring of Marine Litter in the Black Sea environment and proposed **marine litter common indicators;**

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Marine Litter in the Black Sea (8)

DRAFT GUIDELINES ON MONITORING OF MARINE LITTER IN THE BLACK SEA ENVIRONMENT

TABLE OF CONTENT

- I. INTRODUCING THE MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES FOR MARINE LITTER IN THE BLACK SEA**
- II. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGICAL GUIDANCE ON OBJECTIVE ECOQO04/11: MARINE LITTER**
 - II.1. INTRODUCTION
 - II.2. A MONITORING FRAMEWORK FOR MARINE LITTER IN THE BLACK SEA
 - II.3. BEACH LITTER
 - II.4. FLOATING LITTER
 - II.5. SEA FLOOR LITTER
 - II.6. MICROLITTER/MICROPLASTICS
 - II.7. LITTER INGESTED BY OR ENTANGLING MARINE ORGANISMS
- III COSTS OF MARINE LITTER MONITORING**
- IV CITED LITERATURE**



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Marine Litter in the Black Sea (9)

➤ **Plastics is not yet addressed in the legally binding documents of the BSC**, but efforts to coordinate the plastic strategy and implementation of UNEA-4 resolution on plastic litter and microplastics pollution are made through abovementioned activities under SSFA with UNEP/MAP (i.e. BS Regional Action Plan for ML and BS ML Monitoring Guidelines).



Marine Litter in the Black Sea (10)

- Some **relevant measures and activities** to prevent and reduce marine litter from fisheries and aquaculture and related impacts on marine ecosystems **in BS RAP on ML**:
- Implement “**Gear marking to indicate ownership**” concept and ‘reduced ghost catches through the use of environmental neutral upon degradation of nets, pots and traps concept’, in consultation with the competent international and regional organizations in the fishing sector;
- Organise training courses on **ghost fishing**;
- Implementation of the “Fishing for Litter” environmentally sound practices, in consultation with the competent international and regional organizations, to facilitate clean up of the floating litter and the seabed from marine litter caught incidentally and/or **generated by fishing vessels** in their regular activities including derelict fishing gears.



Marine Litter in the Black Sea (11)

➤ Implementation of the Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and contiguous Atlantic area (**ACCOBAMS**), where applicable.





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Conclusions and recommendations:

- **To coordinate the mechanism of implementation of ML RAP for Black Sea** with relevant regional partners (RSCs, UNEP, GFCM, ACCOBAMS, BSEC, industries, academia, NGOs etc.);
- **To harmonize approaches with 4 European RSCs ML RAPs, as well as relevant fisheries organizations and initiatives on regional and global level** (UN activities, FAO (GFCM), CBD Convention, Regular process on Global Reporting (World Ocean Assessment II); Global Working Group on Indicators; EU MSFD, SOI Initiative, Ocean Governance, SDGs, Aichi Targets etc.);
- To **harmonize the approaches** on establishing the baselines for ML and monitoring techniques on regional and global level ;
- To **encourage appropriate involvement** of various authorities and other stakeholders (Regional, National and local authorities from Fisheries and Aquaculture sector, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Civil society.



Thank you

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