

**Ministry of Transport and Communications of Ukraine**

**Follow-Up to the Sixteenth OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum**

**International Expert Conference**

***"The Safety of Navigation and Environmental Security in a Transboundary Context in the Black Sea Basin"***

**CONCEPT PAPER**

**Background and policy context**

The idea of organizing an expert conference on the issues of the safety of navigation and environmental security in a transboundary context in the Black Sea basin was first presented by the delegation of Ukraine at the First Preparatory Conference to the 16th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum (Helsinki, 10-11 September 2007). The initiative was to hold the conference in Ukraine in the framework of the 16<sup>th</sup> OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, as its theme – "Maritime and inland waterways cooperation in the OSCE area: Increasing security and protecting the environment" – is directly linked to the issues proposed for discussion at the conference.

The concept of the conference reflects the opinion that security and environmental challenges are interlinked and salient on the international agenda. Ukraine, being part of the corridor between Europe and Asia, strives for developing this transport route into an efficient component of the international transport network, with fewer barriers, more cost-savings and effective security system, including the safety of navigation. This process has to be implemented with due regard to the environmental factors and risks. It is evident that to ensure an integrated and effective approach to the challenges emerging from the increase in maritime and inland waterway traffic in the Black Sea basin, the cooperation and good will of all states of the region is needed. We fully support the idea of encouraging cooperation in this regard between international organizations and regional arrangements.

The OSCE, with its comprehensive approach to security and being concerned with economic and environmental matters, can and should provide its contribution and added value to this process by raising awareness of the participating States of the importance of efficient co-operation mechanisms, providing expertise and advice, as well as stimulating synergies between existing regional/subregional networks.

**Objectives**

The main aim of the conference is to enhance cooperation in the Black Sea and Danube region on the safety of navigation in maritime and inland waterways as well as on the environmental security by bringing together participating States, international and regional organizations and other players working in this area. Participants of the event shall represent the regions of the Black Sea basin, as well as the Danube river basin.

The conference will provide an opportunity for participants to discuss and exchange views on further sustainable development and integration of water transport infrastructure, improvement of navigation safety systems, prevention of emergency situations and mitigation of their consequences, organization of search and rescue activities in the sea, preserving the ecosystems along inland waterways and seaways in the Black Sea basin and adjacent water basins.

It is envisaged to address various security and environmental aspects of maritime and inland waterways in the Black Sea basin, taking into account the need to discuss and identify current and future challenges in this field, to develop better ways to forecast and prevent possible risks and accidents and to look into possibilities of enhancing co-operation.

The OSCE's role as dialogue facilitator and expertise provider would bring substantial benefits to this process. To avoid duplication of efforts, it is proposed to use the existing capacity of the OSCE to promote dialogue between the experts of the participating States, other international organizations as well as business community and NGOs.

### **Subject**

The theme of the conference reads "The Safety of Navigation and Environmental Security in a Transboundary Context in the Black Sea Basin". The discussions will be divided into two main sections:

- 1) "Sustainable development of water transport infrastructures and improvement of the navigation safety system in the Black Sea basin";
- 2) "Issues of the environment security improvement in a transboundary context in the Black Sea basin".

In the course of the conference it is proposed to address, inter alia, the following issues

- Organization of vessel traffic and pilot services in internal waterways and seaways;
- Prevention of accidents on internal waterways and seaways and mitigation of their consequences;
- Environmental consequences of navigation development for separate sea ecosystems, water areas and coastal territories.

### **The conduct of the conference**

The conference will be held during three working days, in the period of 24-26 June 2008 in the city of Odesa, Ukraine. During the first day, an official opening will be followed by the plenary and separate sessions in the venue of the hotel complex "Odesa" at the Odesa Sea Terminal. The sessions of the second and the third day will take place at the high-speed vessel "Kryms'ka strila". During the cruise it is planned to visit the areas of inland waterways (Danube – Black Sea navigable waterway, Dnipro-Buh-Estuary and Kherson Seaway Channels), Ukrainian transport infrastructure facilities and vessel traffic systems in the towns of Vylkove and Ochakiv, as well as the maritime training centre in the city of Mykolayiv.

The organizing authorities in Ukraine are the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Ukraine, the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Ukraine and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

The list of participants shall include up to 120 officials of respective state administrations, experts of scientific institutions, organizations of coastal countries and international organizations:

- the Black Sea countries - Bulgaria, Georgia, Russia, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine;
- the Danube countries - Austria, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Slovenia, Serbia;
- the Caspian Sea countries - Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan.
- OSCE, IMO, BSEC, DC, ICPDR, secretariats of Espoo Convention, Bern and Aarhus Conventions and other organizations concerned.

### **Outcomes**

It is expected that the conference will result in:

1. Identification of challenges related to the sustainable development and further integration of water transport infrastructures, safety of navigation and environmental security in a transboundary context in the Black Sea and the Danube river regions.
2. Sharing the experience and integrating efforts to implement international conventions, standards and laws on the safety of navigation and environmental security in a transboundary context at a regional level.
3. Drafting the final document on cooperation which would address the entire complex of issues relating to improvement of navigation safety, prevention of emergency situations, mitigation of disasters consequences, organization of search and rescue activity in the sea, as well as saving the ecosystems along inland waterways and seaways.