



# CASPECO Project

## Monthly E-Bulletin

**August 2009**

### **Dear Caspian Stakeholders!**

We are glad to inform you that issuance of an Electronic Bulletin is resumed. E-Bulletin of the CASPECO project is an instrument of environmental dialogue amongst the Caspian Stakeholders and a window for all the stakeholders to express their views, share news and communicate with others.

We welcome and in fact request you to use E-Bulletin to communicate with others on issues of interest as long as they relate to the extent of the Caspian Sea.

E-Bulletin presents you three type of information:

1. Information on the CEP/ Tehran Convention activities
2. Information on the planned activities
3. General information on environmental events and issues of interest to the Caspian stakeholders

Please send us electronically what you wish to appear on the CEP-Bulletin to [PMCU@caspeco.org](mailto:PMCU@caspeco.org).

### **CEP/ Tehran Convention activities**

- Celebration of Caspian Day on August 12
- MSGP/MEG training workshop was held in Azerbaijan
- Special Weblog for Caspian Stakeholders is launched in national languages
- Regional workshop of the EU "Caspian MAP" project was held in Ashgabat

### **Upcoming**

- Scoping Meeting: Development of Ecosystem Monitoring System Regional Meeting, September 9-10, 2009, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
- Land Based Sources of Pollution Protocol September 7-8, 2009, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
- Regional workshop on Caspian seals, 17-18 September, Atyrau
- Forthcoming regional meetings on Biodiversity Protection Protocol - October, Oil Pollution Incidents Protocol - November, EIA in Transboundary Context Protocol - December

### **General information**

- President of Russia held a meeting on near-Caspian cooperation in Astrakhan region
- Presidents of Kazakhstan and Russia discussed agenda of the forthcoming meeting in Orenburg
- Preliminary date for Caspian countries' summit is determined
- Caspian Sea status to be discussed in Ashgabat
- Delta of Volga River is threatened by the hydrocarbon projects
- Tehran looks to Turkmenistan for gas
- Results of Pollution Monitoring of Kura and Araz rivers were announced
- World prices for oil increased

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## CEP/ Tehran Convention activities

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### **MSGP/MEG training workshop was held in Azerbaijan**

Training workshop was held on August 5<sup>th</sup> at Irshad hotel conference hall in Baku for potential applicants to the Matched Small Grants Programme (MSGP) and Micro Environmental Grants Programme (MEG). The representatives of governmental institutions and companies such as State Oil Company, Total Energy company, Sumgayit Center for Environmental Rehabilitation (SCER), «ACEP» LTD and Baku State University, National Academy of Sciences, Khilly Sturgeon Hatchery, as well as national NGO's participated in the workshop. Participants were familiarized with the CASPECO project activities and its grant package and grant procedures. Each of the participants received a full package of MSGP&MEG application forms.

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### **Celebration of Caspian Day**

Celebration of the Caspian Day-2009 was celebrated in Astana, the first time in Kazakhstan. Celebration was organized by the GEF funded CASPECO project in partnership with the NGO “Ecolight” and with support of the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Kazakhstan and the United Nations Development Program in Kazakhstan. The



celebration included children's painting competition and a music concert. More than 50 children of 5-12 years of old have participated in a painting competition on the topic of “Caspian Sea – our treasure”. Their paintings have shown that children are aware of the challenges facing the Caspian Sea. Our children are the future. Future environment depends on them, that is why we

should to cultivate a love and care for native nature – said Mr. Alexandr Bragin, Director of the Department for Legal Providing and International Cooperation of the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Kazakhstan. Six paintings were selected for prizes by the jury. A special concert also was offered to public, which consisted of poems on the theme of Caspian environment, children's group dances, songs and etc. Post cards designed for Caspian Day and leaflets on Tehran Convention, prepared by the Interim Secretariat of the Tehran Convention were disseminated. Many were attracted to the event and it received a wide publicity. Radio and television and national newspapers published special supplements highlighting the significance of the Day.



Celebration activities were also organized in Atyrau city. An opening ceremony of the Photo-exhibition entitled “Caspian Sea region, which I know and care” took place on August 12 at the regional Museum of Art. Exhibition was organized by the NGO “Legal Initiative Center “Globus” together with the Regional

Culture Department and sponsored by the Agip KCO. 100 photos of Mr. Fedor Saraev were exhibited, which illustrate Caspian environment and open an amazing view of the nature of Caspian region.

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### **Special weblog for Caspian Stakeholders is launched in national languages**

A special weblog of the CASPECO project for national Caspian Stakeholders is designed and launched in English, Azerbaijan, Kazakh, Russian and Turkmen languages. The blog provides with information on the CASPECO project activity, future events and variety of interesting news and events on the subject of Caspian environment. It is a tool for networking with the Caspian Stakeholders in littoral countries, which enables to express views and comments on placed information and discuss common issues.

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### **Regional workshop of the EU “Caspian MAP” project was held in Ashgabat**

A regional workshop on discussion of the results of the EU funded «Caspian Water Quality Monitoring and Action Plan for Areas of Pollution concern (Caspian MAP) project was held on 17-18 July in Ashgabat. Government-designed experts from Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan and representatives of international partner organizations participated in the workshop. A review of work done under the project was given at the workshop and basic discussion was held on the Regional Caspian Water Quality Monitoring Programme, developed by the project in support of the Strategic Caspian Action Programme under the Tehran Convention. Participants also reviewed and discussed the Inventory of Pollution Emissions from Land Based Sources, as conducted by the project, and the Regional Pollution Action Programme as developed by the project in support of the Strategic Caspian Action Programme under the Tehran Convention.

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## **Upcoming**

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### **Regional meeting on Shared Environmental Information and Monitoring System (SEIMS)**

The meeting will be held on September 9-10 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan. A discussions on the SEIMS are expected at this meeting, in particular on the format, scope and institutional technical requirements for monitoring and reporting on the implementation and impact of the Tehran Convention and its future protocols, as well as the role and place of monitoring and reporting in a future Caspian information Centre, the need and possible elements of a protocol on environmental monitoring of the Caspian Sea. The government-designated experts from each of the Caspian littoral countries will participate in meeting and it will be facilitated by the UNEP/ROE as the Interim Secretariat for the countries.

### **Regional Meeting on Land Based Sources of Pollution Protocol**

This meeting will be held back-to-back to the meeting on SEIMS in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan on September 14-15 to discuss the draft Land Based Sources of Pollution Protocol. The government-designated official experts from each of the Caspian littoral countries will participate in the meeting and it will be facilitated by the UNEP/ROE as the Interim Secretariat for the countries.

### **Regional Caspian Seal Workshop**

A regional workshop on Caspian seals will be held on 17-18 September in Atyrau on discussion of challenges facing Caspian seals and development of multilateral Seal Conservation and Management Plan. Participation of leading international experts and governmental officials, scientists from five littoral countries is expected. The workshop will be organized by the University of Leeds & CISS with sponsorship of AGIP KCO.

### **Forthcoming regional meetings on Biodiversity Protection Protocol, Oil Pollution Incidents Protocol, EIA in Transboundary Context Protocol**

The Regional Meeting on Biodiversity Protection Protocol will be held on October 5-7 in Baku, Azerbaijan to discuss the draft Biodiversity Protocol.

The Regional Meeting on Oil Pollution Incidents (OPI) will be held in November at the PMCU in Astana to discuss the draft OPI Protocol.

Regional Meeting on EIA in Transboundary Context Protocol is planned to be held in Moscow, Russia on December to discuss the draft EIA Protocol.

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## **General information**

### **President of Russia held a meeting on near-Caspian cooperation in Astrakhan region**

Kazakhstan Today - During a working trip to the Astrakhan region, the President of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev, held the meeting concerning near-Caspian cooperation. The meeting participants have discussed the questions of economic development and cooperation in the Caspian region. Trade and economic relations of Russia with the near-Caspian states - Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Iran, as a whole,

have been developing dynamically enough. In 2008, goods turnover of Russia with these countries totaled \$26.7 billion that is by 21 % more in comparison with the previous year. The main spheres of economic development and cooperation of the Caspian Sea states are: mining operations, including oil and gas, navigation, fishery, seafood, and tourism.

To safeguard Caspian Sea for future generations and prevention its ecological decline are the main objectives told President, Dmitry Medvedev. He also marked the need to finalize work on protocols to the Framework Convention for the protection of the marine environment of the Caspian Sea.



### **Presidents of Kazakhstan and Russia discussed agenda of the forthcoming meeting in Orenburg**

Kazakhstan Today - The President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, and the President of the Russian Federation, Dmitry Medvedev discussed by phone the agenda of the forthcoming meeting in Orenburg that will take place during the Forum of Inter-Regional Cooperation of Kazakhstan and Russia,



the agency reports citing the press service of the head of the state. The leaders of the states discussed a wide range of issues on development of mutual relations. The officials reached the arrangement on carrying out in Aktau an informal meeting of the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan to discuss development of interstate relationships and cooperation of the near-Caspian states, including the negotiating process on status of the Caspian Sea.

#### **Preliminary date for Caspian countries' summit is determined**

Kazakhstan/Trend News. The Kazakh, Russian, Azerbaijani and Turkmen Presidents will discuss the status of the Caspian Sea at a summit in Aktau. According to preliminary information, the meeting will be held on September 13. The agreement on the informal meeting between the Presidents of the four Caspian countries was reached during a phone conversation between Kazakh president Nursultan Nazarbayev and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. The development of inter-state relations, the interaction between Caspian countries and a negotiation process on the status of the Caspian Sea will be discussed at the meeting," the Kazakh presidential press-service said earlier.

The status of the Caspian Sea is determined by the 1921 and 1940 treaties between the Soviet Union and Iran. The negotiation process to establish a new legal status still continues. Several countries have concluded bilateral agreements. In July 1998 Kazakhstan and Russia signed an agreement on the delimitation of the seabed in the north part of the Caspian Sea in order to exercise sovereign rights for subsoil use. Protocol to the Agreement was signed in May 2002. Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan signed an agreement on the delimitation of the Caspian seabed and protocol to this agreement on November 29, 2001 and February 27, 2003. Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Russia signed an agreement on the point of junction of the boundaries between adjacent plots of the Caspian seabed on May 14, 2003. Iran suggested dividing the Caspian Sea equally (20 percent for each side). Azerbaijan refused this suggestion. The outcome of this would be Iran receiving one third of Azerbaijan's segment of the Caspian Sea. The coast-sharing countries signed the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea in Tehran in November 2003. The new legal status of the Caspian Sea is planned to settle the corresponding Convention, the text of which is being agreed at meetings of the special work group.

#### **Caspian Sea status to be discussed in Ashgabat**

Five-sided talks on legal status of Caspian Sea will be held next month in Ashgabat with the participation of deputy foreign ministers of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Russia and Iran. Turkmenistan has officially appealed the Foreign Ministry of Azerbaijan and other Caspian states with a proposal to hold the meeting. The main focus of discussions at the meeting will be to determine coordinates of median line of the Caspian Sea which will be determined between the Caspian littoral states upon national sectoral principles. Previous negotiations took place in 2008 in Baku. The meeting will be held prior to the Summit of Heads of Caspian States in Aktau.

#### **Delta of Volga River is threatened by the hydrocarbon projects**

The day before the Caspian Day, on August 12 the WWF Russia has to state that one of the most valuable wetland of international significance «Delta of Volga river is under threat of the hydrocarbon



projects impact. According to available for WWF information, a changing process of environment protection regime for the wetland of international significance Delta of Volga river and its borders is going on, which will allow to explore and mine hydrocarbons in its territories. In spite of the fact that WWF Russia and other environmental public organizations took part in works on the specification of wetland's sea borders and appealed to the relevant authorities of the Russian Federation and Astrakhan administration with their proposals, planned regime and borders shifts are carried out without official involvement of stakeholders and wide public discussion, as well as without discussion with Ramsar Convention bodies, what is a provision of the Convention for a case of wetland's status change.

Public organizations addressed repeatedly to the Ministry of the Natural Resources, Administration of the Astrakhan region, companies, which are planning their activities in the wetland territory in the north of Caspian Sea and insisted on inadmissibility of oil and gas exploration and mining works in the territory of the wetland, - spoke Aleksey Knizhnikov, Oil & Gas Environmental Policy Officer, WWF-Russia, - However, unfortunately, events develop in an opposite direction. Opinions of the public organizations and leading scientists are ignored. In that connection we reserve the right to address to the Ramsar Convention and Tehran Convention Secretariats with appeal to take effective measures on protection of the unique nature of Delta of Volga River. Uniqueness of the nature of delta of the Volga River and necessity of its protection has been recognized in the first half of last century when the first in the USSR Astrakhan reserve has been created in 1919. According to the Decision of Ministerial Council of the USSR No 1049 dated from 25.12.1975 the site is declared a wetland of international significance under protection of Ramsar Convention. The wetland status is confirmed by the Russian Federation and formalized by the Decree of Government of the Russian Federation No 1050 dated from September 13, 1994. Wetland statute with description of its borders and territory regime is adopted by the Decree of Astrakhan oblast Administration Head No 500 dated from 22.12.1997. At present, works on inclusion of delta of Volga River to the UNESCO World Heritage list is carrying out. At the same time leading Russian and international environmental organizations have to pay more attention to protection of Volga delta from human impact, and first of all from attempts to implement exploration and mining projects in its territory.

### **Tehran looks to Turkmenistan for gas**

ASHGABAT -- Turkmenistan is planning to increase its natural gas exports to Iran by 75 percent, from 8 billion cubic meters (bcm) per year to 14 bcm. The gas will be exported to Iran from December and the price will be based on international rates, according to state media reports last week. The new pipeline from the Dovletabat field in southeastern Turkmenistan to the Iranian border will have a capacity of 12.5 bcm of gas per year and should be in operation by the end of the year. The countries have also suggested that export could be rose to as much as 20 bcm in the future. Before Russia has been the only recipient of Dovletabat's gas. While Iran lays claim to the second-largest gas reserves in the world, the lack of productive investment coupled with growing domestic consumption has impeded the country's self-sufficiency. As such, imports from Turkmenistan will equal Iran's current exports to Turkey. Europe and China have been lining up to make business with the Central Asian state. China is expected to start importing up to 40 bcm by the end of the year. Turkmenistan is set to play a significant role in the EU's Nabucco gas pipeline project, in European and US attempts to disrupt Russia's present monopoly.

**Results of Pollution Monitoring of Kura and Araz rivers were announced**

The Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of Azerbaijan have carried out monitoring of pollution level of the transboundary rivers Kura and Araz, and pollution status of their transboundary tributaries for August. Water level in Kura in compare with I decade of August dropped down on 33 m<sup>3</sup>/sm. According to the monitoring results the quantity of biogene substances in Kura river exceeds norms due to river pollution by wastewaters and industrial wasted of Georgia and Armenia. Phenols and copper compounds detected in water.

**World prices for oil increased**

Kazakhstan Today - The world prices for oil, following the results of tenders on Wednesday have significantly increased, the agency reports citing RIA RosBusinessConsulting (RBC).

The prices of the world market for oil, following the results of tenders at the leading oil stock exchanges significantly increased on August 19, 2009. The official prices of oil futures of the next month of delivery have amounted to: in London on InterContinental Exchange Futures Europe - IPE Brent Crude - \$74.59 (+2.22) per barrel and in New York on New York Mercantile Exchange - Light, Sweet Crude Oil - \$72.42 (+3.23) per barrel.