



CASPECO Project

Monthly E-Bulletin

September 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.

Activities carried out

- Land Based Sources of Pollution Protocol September 7-8, 2009, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
- Scoping Meeting: Development of Ecosystem Monitoring System Regional Meeting, September 9-10, 2009, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
- Regional workshop on Caspian Seals, 17-18 September, Atyrau
- Technical Evaluation of the MSGP concept papers

Upcoming activities and events

- OSCE Meeting: Oil Spill Preparedness, Response and Cooperation in the Caspian Region, October 14-17, Atyrau
- Regional Meeting on LBS Protocol, November 9, Astana
- Regional Meeting on Oil Pollution Incidents (OPI), November 10-12, Astana
- MSGP Evaluation Meeting, November 13, Astana

- 14-th CASPCOM Session, November 23-24, Tehran (IRI)

General information

- Presidents of Kazakhstan, Russia, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan arrived in Aktau took part in informal summit
 - Iran assured Aktau meeting will not focus on Caspian Sea legal status
 - No Change in Iran's Position on Caspian Sea
 - State ecological monitoring of Caspian Sea needs to be organized
 - State program project Ecology of Kazakhstan - 2020 submitted for consideration
 - Construction of Trans-Caspian gas pipeline requires consent of all Caspian littoral countries: StatoilHydro
 - Workshop on conservation of Caspian seals in Turkmenistan
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Activities carried out

Land Based Sources of Pollution Protocol September 7-8, 2009, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

The main outcome of the meeting, which was held in Ashgabat on September 7-8, was the text of the Protocol for the Protection of the Caspian Sea against Pollution from land-based sources and land-based activities and five annexes being almost finalized. The meeting agreed to finalize the text and annexes at a one day meeting in Astana in November.

Scoping Meeting: Development of Ecosystem Monitoring System Regional Meeting, September 9-10, 2009, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

The leading environmental specialists from Iran, Azerbaijan, Russia, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan and the international experts and consultants took part in the forum to discuss ways and means of monitor the environment of the Sea, to share information and to develop a report on the state of the environment.

Regional workshop on Caspian Seals, 17-18 September, Atyrau

A two days meeting sponsored by the Agip KCO to review the latest on the status of the seals in the Caspian.

Technical Evaluation of the MSGP concept papers

40 Matched Small Grants Programme Concept papers are received from applicants from all 5 Caspian littoral states. Technical evaluation of the received concept papers will be made till the end of September applicants will receive comments and recommendations on their projects.

Upcoming

OSCE Meeting: Oil Spill Preparedness, Response and Cooperation in the Caspian Region, October 14-17, Atyrau

A review of the status of Oil Spill Preparedness, Response and Cooperation in the Caspian Region.

Regional Meeting on LBS Protocol, November 9, Astana

Regional Meeting on LBS Protocol will be held on November 9 in Astana. Designated officials from littoral countries will gather to continue discussions on the LBS Protocol.

Regional Meeting on Oil Pollution Incidents (OPI), November 10-12, Astana

Regional Meeting on OPI Protocol will be held on November 10-12 in Astana. Designated officials of five littoral countries will take part in the meeting to discuss OPI Protocol text.

MSGP Evaluation Meeting, November 13, Astana

The first Meeting of the Evaluation Committee on evaluation of received applications for the Matched Small Grants Programme will be held in Astana on 13th of November. Members of the evaluation Committee from all five littoral countries will participate in the meeting.

14-th CASPCOM Session, November 23-24, Tehran (IRI)

Regular Fourteenth meeting of the Coordinating Committee on Hydrometeorology and Pollution Monitoring of the Caspian Sea will be held in Tehran on November 23-24. Members of the Committee will discuss priority problems in the field of hydrometeorology and monitoring of pollution of the Caspian Sea.

General information

Presidents of Kazakhstan, Russia, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan arrived in Aktau took part in informal summit

The Presidents of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, Russia, Dmitry Medvedev, Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, and Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, participated in an informal summit in Aktau, the agency reports. The informal summit of the heads of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan took place on September 11-13 in Aktau. During the summit, the officials discussed the questions of cooperation within the limits of integration associations on the post-Soviet territory, including within the limits of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and energy and transport issues of the region with participation of Kazakhstan, Russia, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan.

Iran assured Aktau meeting will not focus on Caspian Sea legal status

Iranian Ambassador to Azerbaijan expressed concern that official Tehran was not invited to the meeting of four heads of Caspian states in Aktau, but said that Iran was assured that the meeting will not focus on the legal status of the Caspian Sea. "Kazakhstan, as the organizer of the meeting, assured Iran that the legal status of the Caspian Sea is not a topic of discussions at this meeting and talks on this issue are possible only between all five Caspian states," Iranian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Mohammad Bagher Behrami. On September 11, the Presidents of Azerbaijan, Russia, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan held an informal meeting in Aktau. The Heads of States discussed the development of bilateral and multilateral relations. Behrami said that according to the Kazakh side, the meeting in Aktau discussed the development of economic relations of the four countries of the CIS, conducting sports tournaments and other events. He noted that negotiations on the status of the Caspian Sea without the participation of Iran contradict the national interests of this country. "Upon the previous agreements, documents not signed by all five Caspian littoral states, will not be valid," said Iranian diplomat. Behrami reminded that the next Caspian summit will be held in October in Baku. The Iranian ambassador also emphasized the inadmissibility of "any military steps". Behrami added that the sides should make efforts to ensure that the Caspian Sea remains the sea of peace and the Caspian states contribute to security in the Caspian Sea. "Thus, we do not allow any military ships to appear on our water space," said the Iranian ambassador. Behrami considers it wrong the sail of a ship under the flag of any state in the Caspian Sea, except the Caspian countries. According to him, the agreement on the passage of ships on the Caspian Sea was reached between the countries in Tehran in October last year.

No Change in Iran's Position on Caspian Sea

The Iranian Foreign Ministry announced that Tehran has not changed its position on the materialization of its rights in the Caspian Sea. "There has happened no change in Iran's position on the Caspian Sea," the Ministry's Spokesman Hassan Qashqavi told reporters in a weekly press conference. The status of the oil and gas rich inland sea has been a source of disagreement among the littoral states since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Describing Iran's diplomacy on the Caspian Sea issues active and successful, Qashqavi reiterated, "Our demand is based on known international rules and does not go beyond this framework and it's a clear demand." He also underlined that the legal regime of the lakes and closed seas is determined through the agreement and consensus of all littoral states, "and the same rule applies to the Caspian Sea as well". Referring to the summit of the Caspian Sea littoral states held in the western Kazakh city of Aktau on Thursday without Iran's presence at which Tehran protested, Qashqavi said the foreign ministry's serious reaction made a number of littoral states' presidents including Kazakhstan to withdraw from studying the legal regime of the Sea.

Earlier Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki voiced displeasure at the summit, cautioning that the gathering would be against Tehran's interests. "In our view the meeting runs counter to Iran's national interests," Mottaki said in a meeting with Astana's new ambassador to Tehran. Also the Iranian foreign ministry summoned the countries' (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Russia) ambassadors to ask for explanations and called on its envoys to the littoral states to meet the hosting countries' officials

and announce Iran's concern and sensitivity regarding the issue. The Caspian Sea is estimated to contain between 17 billion and 33 billion barrels of proven oil reserves.

State ecological monitoring of Caspian Sea needs to be organized

First vice chairman of Committee of Ecological Regulation and Control of the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Kazakhstan, Adletbek Bekeev, said that the system of state ecological monitoring of the Caspian Sea needs to be organized. "Development of the pool of the Caspian Sea is a very big issue. On one hand, it has very rich resources and, on the other hand, the large world companies. There are many disputable issues there," A. Bekeev said. "The Caspian Sea needs the system of state monitoring when monitoring will be done by an instrument, not people, or organizations."

Construction of Trans-Caspian gas pipeline requires consent of all Caspian littoral countries: StatoilHydro

The construction of the Trans-Caspian pipeline designed to export gas from Central Asia to the European markets via the South Caucasus will require consent of all the Caspian countries, Europe's major gas supplier, Norway's StatoilHydro, said.

"We would not like to comment on various discussions around Turkmen gas transportation (to world markets) via Azerbaijan," head of StatoilHydro Azerbaijan, Kristian Hausken, said. Turkmenistan, which according to BP's data, has 7.94 trillion cubic meters of proven natural gas reserves, currently has contracts to export gas to Russia and Iran. For the diversification, Turkmenistan can start gas sale to the European and Chinese companies. At present, the European companies actively make ideas on the Nabucco gas pipeline construction, which can be filled, particularly with the Turkmen and Azerbaijani gas, whose proven reserves are estimated by BP at 1.2 trillion cubic meters. Azerbaijan's largest gas field is Shah Deniz, where owning 25.5 of shares, StatoilHydro is a commercial operator carrying out the project to sell fuel on the markets in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. "StatoilHydro continues to study all opportunities to commercialise the second stage of Shah Deniz project. We will select the solution which is giving the best overall commercial result," Hausken said. Under the SOCAR forecasts, gas production on the Shah Deniz field is to be increased to about 20 billion cubic meters per year within a few years due to the implementation of the "Stage 2". According to data provided by BP, the proved gas reserves in the Caspian Sea, whose delimitation of borders have not yet fully completed is 83.84 trillion cubic meters. Azerbaijan, Russia and Kazakhstan have an agreement on the delimitation of their borders in the Caspian Sea. The determination of the status of the Caspian Sea remains on the agenda of Baku, Ashgabat and Tehran.

Workshop on conservation of Caspian seals in Turkmenistan

Ministry of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan held in the coastal town of Turkmenbashi a seminar on the issue of preserving seals living on the Caspian - the only representative of this family of mammals threatened with extinction. According to information provided by news service Turkmen Dovlet Khabarlari (TDH), during the past hundred years, the total number of Caspian seals has declined by 90 percent. The event was taking place within the project implemented with the assistance of the international Darwin

Initiative Program (Leeds, UK). The project involved all five Caspian littoral countries. The agenda included the use of effective surveillance and monitoring system of seals in the Caspian countries, the use of modern methods of aerial photography and satellite telemetry, the helicopters and ships. The International Union for Conservation of Nature included the Caspian seal in red list. International experts consider that the next step is to alter the status of the Caspian seal directly in the littoral states. It is to include them in the national red book, prohibit commercial fishing, strengthening the system to protect habitats of seals, other urgent measures.