

Proposal for a routing system on the Adriatic sea

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The safety of navigation and protection of the sea from pollution are the basic determinants of modern maritime activities. The harmful consequences of maritime accidents compel governments of littoral states to undertake expansion of the safety level of navigation and pollution prevention as basic assignments of their maritime policies. In this sense the efforts of the governments of the Republic of Italy, the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Croatia are understandable in their striving to keep navigation on the Adriatic Sea, their common heritage, as safe as possible. In addition to safety of life at sea, the protection of the sea and shore against pollution

from ships in navigation is of particular importance for coastal states. Generally speaking, the measures that are available to the states with regard to protection against pollution are divergent in the light of their aim: are they intended as an endeavour to lessen the quantity of pollution from ships in navigation, which are recorded as minor pollution of greater frequency, or is their aim to prevent large-scale pollution in case of maritime accidents?

There are several characteristics of the Adriatic Sea that impose special attention to pollution on a large scale in case of maritime accidents.

The Adriatic Sea is a deeply indented arm into the European continent. It is a wholly enclosed sea and therefore a unique ecological system within the Mediterranean setting. Any large-scale pollution on the Adriatic would cause exceptional damage to the sea and coast, as a rule far greater than, for example, pollution on the high seas. A specifically unfavourable circumstance in case of large-scale pollution is the limited depths of the Adriatic, chiefly in its northern part.

The second important characteristic of the Adriatic Sea results from its geographical and traffic position. All the main ports, in particular those that perform the greatest part of the transport of liquid cargoes, are located in the northern part of the Adriatic Sea, thus most of the maritime traffic is done lengthwise, along the entire stretch of the Adriatic Sea.

Fortunately, the Adriatic has so far not had any maritime accidents with large-scale pollution. In view of the volume of maritime traffic, in the near future and especially after the ending of military conflicts on the Balkans, one should expect a notable increase in maritime traffic due to the anticipated industrial development of some littoral states. Since an increase in traffic is at the same time an increase in the number of ships in navigation and in the volumes of cargo, especially of dangerous cargoes and pollutants, one may also expect an increase of the risk of maritime accidents, thus the risk of large-scale pollution.

For the above mentioned

reasons, it is necessary for the states located along the shores of the Adriatic to undertake accessible measures for the purpose of preventing maritime accidents that may result in large-scale pollution.

In the light of internationally accepted instruments, a basic measure of pollution prevention in cases of accidents of ships that may be considered is the establishment of the Adriatic Sea as a particularly sensitive area. In this sense, this paper deals with the routing system on the Adriatic, the application of which would enable a significant increase of the level of safety of maritime navigation, thereby also of the level of protection against the consequences of maritime accidents.

Legal foundation

The first traffic separation scheme was established in 1967 in the Dover Strait at the suggestion of J. Garcia-Frias, as well as L. Oudet (Beattie¹, Cotter²), in the beginning as a recommendation, later as an officially accepted measure. After familiarizing masters and mates with the new principles of navigation in the course of a few years, the number of collisions significantly decreased, especially between ships sailing in opposite courses.

Since 1968 the routing of the ships in international waters has been taken over by the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organization (IMCO, today the International Maritime Organization - IMO), and the first

The paper illustrates the need to introduce a consistent routing system on the Adriatic Sea for the purpose of preventing maritime accidents with large-scale pollutions. The grounds for international legislation for introducing the routing system have been established too, as well as the basic principles that should be adhered to on the occasion of determining the routing system. Furthermore, a proposal for a routing system is given and the reasons in favour of such a choice.