

The Adriatic sea: a particularly sensitive area

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1. Introduction

Pollution prevention of the sea and coast recently imposes itself as a basic determinant of the maritime policy of any coastal state. The significance of pollution prevention grows proportionately with the ever-growing importance of the branches of economy based on marine technologies or those in close connection with the sea.

As a state with traditional maritime orientation the Republic of Croatia links significant economic potentials to marine technologies (i.e. maritime transport and shipbuilding), and particularly to tourism, a single most important factor of economic development of its coastal regions. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance for

the Republic of Croatia, as well as for its neighboring states to enhance, as much as possible, the level of pollution prevention of the sea and coast.

Since the coasts of the Adriatic Sea, in the part that is of particular interest for the Republic of Croatia, also include those of the Republic of Italy and the Republic of Slovenia, the basic condition for effective pollution prevention is to establish close cooperation between these states. This cooperation must include coordinated activities for setting up and carrying out various measures against pollution. Among these international recognition of the Adriatic Sea as particularly sensitive area according to MARPOL 73/78 convention is the most important one.

In order to analyze the possibilities of establishment of the Adriatic Sea as a particularly sensitive area, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Transport and Communications of the Republic of Croatia has initiated a series of activities focussed on the mentioned requirements. One of these activities is the initiation of the project on routing system and traffic separation schemes as a segment of the aggregate efforts of accomplishing higher levels of protection of the sea and coast of the Republic of Croatia against pollution. The above-mentioned project has been entrusted to the Faculty of Maritime Studies in Rijeka. In addition, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Transport and

Communications of the Republic of Croatia also has initiated a higher level project with fundamental aim to outline the desirable future organization of a marine traffic in the Adriatic Sea and particularly in the coastal waters of the Republic of Croatia. Therefore, this paper presents the preliminary results foreseen in the present stage of the project's development.

2. Principles of pollution protection of sea and coast

According to MARPOL 73/78 the internationally recognized measures for marine environment can be assigned to two basic concepts: the concept of special areas "where for recognized technical reasons in relation to its oceanographical and ecological conditions and to the particular character of its traffic, the adoption of special mandatory methods for the prevention of sea pollution by oil is required" and the concept of particularly sensitive areas "which need special protection through action by IMO because of its significance for recognized ecological or socioeconomic or scientific reasons and which may be vulnerable to damage by maritime activities".

In special areas the main goal is achieved through discharging limitations, while in particularly sensitive areas the predominant measures are those that indirectly assist protection of the marine environment by preventing casualties. As the Mediterranean Sea area has already been declared as a special area, a further step to increase the level of protection of the Adriatic Sea is its declaration as a particularly sensitive area.

The criteria for establishment an area as a particularly sensitive area are grouped into three categories: the ecological criteria, social, cultural and economic criteria, and scientific and educational criteria, as defined in the IMO Assembly resolution A.720 [1]. In order to acquire an international recognition of the Adriatic Sea as a particularly sensitive area these criteria should be checked against different characteristics of the Adriatic Sea.

Regarding ecological criteria it can be deemed that the Adriatic sea met as the most important the criterium of integrity and vulnerability. Since the Adriatic Sea is a

L'articolo tratta della possibilità di dichiarare il Mare Adriatico un'area di particolare sensibilità, secondo la definizione data della Convenzione MARPOL 73/78. Ai fini di incrementare i livelli di sicurezza della navigazione e di proteggere l'Adriatico da inquinamenti a larga scala, vengono discusse proposte per l'introduzione di varie misure, quali un sistema di guida e un sistema di sorveglianza del traffico navale. Nel testo vengono presentate le caratteristiche essenziali dei due sistemi e viene posto l'accento sulla necessità di una stretta cooperazione fra stati rivieraschi confinanti, nel caso la Repubblica Italiana, la Repubblica Slovena e la Repubblica Croata.