



RESEARCH SERVICE
OF THE VERKHOVNA RADA OF UKRAINE



Round-Table Discussion

The environmental impact of the war on the Black Sea

Friday 22 May 2026, 10.00 – 12.00 EEST | Hybrid format

CONCEPT NOTE

The International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS), in cooperation with the Research Service of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, organise the Round-Table Discussion “**The environmental impact of the war on the Black Sea**”, to be held in Athens, Greece, on **Friday 22 May 2026**, at 10.00 – 12.00 EEST, in a hybrid format.

The event will bring together experts to exchange on the environmental implications of the war, with the aim to raise awareness and mobilise stakeholders in efforts to safeguard the ecological value and economic resilience of the Black Sea.

CONTEXT

Now in its fourth year, Russia’s war against Ukraine has had significant impact on the environment, affecting natural ecosystems, food security, and livelihoods. The consequences are severe and multifaceted, with spillovers extending beyond the frontlines.

The Black Sea basin, a vital hub for biodiversity, fisheries, maritime transport, and tourism, faces increased challenges with broader implications for the region, ranging from marine pollution and biodiversity loss to economic disruptions.

Naval mines have been found drifting near Ukrainian ports, as well as in the waters of Türkiye, Bulgaria, and Romania, posing a constant threat to maritime transport. In 2024, a major oil spill from two Russian oil tankers reportedly killed at least 111 marine mammals, including dolphins and harbour porpoises, 175 seabirds and thousands of jellyfish along the Odesa coast. The destruction of the Kakhovka Dam in 2023 disrupted water supply systems and released nearly 90,000 tonnes of toxic chemicals, including arsenic, nickel, and zinc, into the Dnieper River and the Black Sea, putting at risk both humans and animals.

Adding these to the existing environmental pressures affecting the Black Sea, the environmental damage is likely to impact future generations; yet the prospects of ecological recovery remain uncertain.

ABOUT THE EVENT

The International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS), in cooperation with the Research Service of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, organise the Round-Table Discussion “**The environmental impact of the war on the Black Sea**”, to be held in Athens, Greece, on **Friday 22 May 2026**, at 10.00 – 12.00 EEST, in a hybrid format.

The event will bring together experts from policy and academia to exchange on the direct and indirect environmental impact of the war on ecosystems in the Black Sea. Discussions will aim to foster coordinated research, policy responses, and international cooperation with a view to safeguarding the ecological value and economic resilience of the Black Sea.

Objectives

- To enhance public understanding on the environmental consequences of military activities.
- To highlight scientific efforts and practices to support evidence-based actions and policies.
- To raise awareness and foster cooperation among regional stakeholders for mitigation and recovery.

DRAFT AGENDA

10.00 – 10.20	Welcome and opening remarks
10.20 – 10.40	Keynote Speech UNDERSTANDING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF WAR ON THE BLACK SEA. Focus: Scientific findings on pollution, biodiversity loss, and ecosystems’ disruption resulting from the war. Overview of the consequences for economic activities and coastal communities.
10.40 – 11.40	Round-Table Discussion ENHANCED STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION FOR MITIGATION AND RECOVERY.

Focus: Identification of opportunities for cross-border collaboration for conservation and recovery. The role of international cooperation and institutional engagement. Case studies from affected regions.

11.40 – 12.00

Q&A Session