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Answer given by Ms Roswall
on behalf of the European Commission
(6.3.2025)

The Commission acknowledges the increased difficulties for Romania and Bulgaria to protect their marine environment, exacerbated by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the absence of well-functioning regional cooperation. Under the Marine Strategy Framework Directive¹ (MSFD), Romania and Bulgaria have been assisted in developing their marine strategies to protect their marine waters.

The EU Research and Innovation Framework Programme Horizon Europe² supports environmental protection in the Black Sea³. The Interreg Black Sea programme⁴ provides EUR 95 million of EU funds⁵. The Cohesion Policy⁶ provides support for a total estimated value of EUR 70 million, focused on the Natura 2000 sites in the Black Sea and Danube Delta.

A project⁷ promoted monitoring and assessment activities, in line with MSFD requirements. Under the Common Maritime Agenda⁸ for the Black Sea, projects against marine pollution due to the ongoing conflict started⁹.

The Commission alerts the authorities in Bulgaria and Romania daily on possible pollution incidents, including from oil spills, detected by satellite surveillance¹⁰. National authorities can request assistance from the Union Civil Protection Mechanism¹¹.

Furthermore, the Ukraine Investment Framework¹² could support investments related to

¹ Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy, OJ L 164, 25.6.2008, p. 19–40.

² https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en

³ Notably through the EU Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/restore-our-ocean-and-waters_en and more particularly its Danube and Black Sea Lighthouse: <https://restore4life.eu/eu-missions-restore-our-ocean-waters/> or through specific projects such as <https://www.doorsblacksea.eu>, <https://bridgeblacksea.org/>

⁴ Involving eight countries <https://blacksea-cbc.net/>

⁵ Much of it for risk prevention and biodiversity.

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/what/investment-policy_en

⁷ <https://emblasproject.org/>

⁸ The EU sea basin strategy promoting maritime regional cooperation among the coastal countries in the Black Sea region, except for Russia.

⁹ Building Response Frameworks under existing and new Marine Pollution Challenges in the Black Sea (RESPONSE): <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/org-details/999999999/project/101124661/program/43392145/details> and Harnessing complementary curricular preparedness via sustainable management in response to civil and military pollution on the coastline, tributaries and lagoons in Black Sea's North, West, South zone (Black Sea SIERRA): <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/org-details/999999999/project/101124670/program/43392145/details>

¹⁰ CleanSeaNet hosted by the European Maritime Safety Agency: <https://www.emsa.europa.eu/csn-menu.html>

¹¹ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/eu-civil-protection-mechanism_en via the Emergency Response Coordination Centre.

¹² https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/ukraine/ukraine-investment-framework_en

climate change, environmental and biodiversity protection.

The Commission also works towards the EU goal¹³ of acceding the Bucharest Convention, improving environmental protection of the Black Sea and strengthening the EU technical and financial contribution.

¹³ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/39779/st10219-en19.pdf> - The tenth paragraph refers to the EU's accession to the Black Sea Commission, as follows: '(...) The Council reaffirms the EU's aim to become a full member of the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution. The Council particularly takes into account the need for enhanced international cooperation for addressing the environmental and climate challenges in the Black Sea. (...)'