

**Protection of Marine Ecosystems while the industrial development at the
continental shelf
Civil G 20, June 2013**

Preamble

Today almost 30% of hydrocarbons are developed from the offshore, and this development always comes together with emergency situations and catastrophes with evident negative impacts on marine ecosystems and shoreline areas. After 2009 accident in Timor Sea (Australia offshore) and 2010 blowout in the Gulf of Mexico (US offshore) the President of Russia has proposed to establish Global Marine Environment Protection Initiative (GMEP) during the G 20 meeting in Toronto.

** Following the recent oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico we recognize the need to share best practices to protect the marine environment, prevent accidents related to offshore exploration and development, as well as transportation, and deal with their consequences.*

Over the last years this initiative has resulted in the creation of web based information resource for sharing available best practices and technologies related to security and safety. This is evidently insufficient for preserving marine ecosystems and significant reduction of risks related to offshore oil and gas projects.

Overall assessment of risks and challenges for marine ecosystems

New technologies of deepwater drilling, transportation of hydrocarbons, evidently increase of anthropogenic impact on marine ecosystems. Offshore hydrocarbon development at geographical frontiers, like Arctic, creates risks related to oil spills in the first hand. In addition the industry creates noise pollution (periodic like seismic and permanent from transportation and routine activities) in regions where there was no such noises previously. There is general consensus that today our knowledge about ecosystems resilience, mitigation measures and general knowledge about ecosystems themselves is insufficient.

Given the above the priority areas for protecting marine environment shall be:

- to urge the Governments to adopt ecosystem based approaches to management of marine areas as key principles of human activities regulation in marine areas
- to urge the Governments to stimulate the identification of ecologically and biologically significant and sensitive areas and granting these areas appropriate use and management regimes. The most significant and sensitive areas shall be protected from use regimes with potential environmental harm (e.g. extraction of mineral non-renewable resources, intensive transportation)
- to urge the Governments to stimulate the development of national and trans-boundary marine management plans in order to regulate, optimize, and minimize anthropogenic impact on marine ecosystems. Such plans may also decrease risks of emergency situations in marine areas caused by direct collusion 'conflicts' between different types of marine use (oil – transportation, oil – fisheries, transport – fisheries, oil - tourism)

The following basic environmental principles shall be applied to these plans – transparency and public involvement, precautionary principle, priority of sustainable use of biological resources over extraction of non-renewable resources, 'polluter pays' principle.

At short-term scale

- to urge Governments to join the Working group on noise (US Government initiative), adoption of The FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated, adoption and ratification of Espoo Convention and protocol of strategic environmental assessment to this Convention, finalizing and adopting a robust Polar Code that is fit for purpose regarding polar shipping operations and with mandatory environmental requirements which specifically protect the unique and sensitive areas of the polar regions from actual and potential impacts from shipping operations