

EUCC Coastal News

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– Climate and Energy –

1. 68 Days to go before the Kyoto Protocol enters into force

Sea level rise and other aspects of global warming is a major threat to coastal zones and marine environments. Therefore, the Tenth Session of the Conference of Parties of the UN Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP 10, 6 - 17 December 2004) in Buenos Aires, is a good occasion for EUCC Coastal News to again highlight aspects of climate change. Since Russia ratified the Kyoto Protocol, it will enter into force on 17 February 2005. According to the Conference background papers average temperatures and sea level are rising, snow cover is decreasing and precipitation patterns are changing; there is new and stronger evidence that most of the global warming that occurred over the last 50 years is attributable to human activities. Exceptional weather events (cyclones and heavy rainfall, droughts and heat-waves), and their impacts (floods, including glacier lake outburst floods and increasing number of algal blooms in swimming and drinking water), rapidly declining ice sheets and glaciers and threats to polar and marine ecosystems (e.g. coral reefs) are reported at an almost daily basis. World wide criticism on the US position is obviously fostered by all this news, as well as by the re-election of President Bush

and the first one-liners of his staff. According to James Connaughton, president of the Environmental Commission of the White House, Bush refuses to sign any treaty that costs an American his job, let alone a treaty that costs 5 million jobs as the Kyoto Protocol. Also the Minister of Environment called the Protocol a bad treaty for the US, even though 300 scientists assured that the Arctic region is warming up because of human activities. Alex Zaitchik, managing editor of Perspectives (The Central European Journal of International Affairs), summarised the increasing frustration: "Of course any long-term meaningful reduction in greenhouse gasses will depend on US involvement - whose 4% of world population produce 30% of global emissions - but the world cannot afford to wait for Goliath to come to his senses". In the running-up to 'Buenos Aires' the UK government has indicated that climate change will be high on its agenda during its EU Presidency in the 2nd half of 2005. Many hope that this will finally have an impact on the US position.

<http://unfccc.int/2860.php>

2. Man mainly responsible for greenhouse effect, not sun spots

Virtually all climate experts world wide agree that the greenhouse effect is mainly caused by increased emission of greenhouse gases. However, still some experts oppose to this position, referring to variations in sun spots. These variations may have an impact on temperatures in our solar system. At this moment there are more sunspots than during the past 8000 years. However, the chance that the sun will stay as active for half a century as it is now, is only a few percent. Researchers Sami Solanki of the Max Planck Institute for Solar System Research and Ilya Usoskin of the University of Oulu have studied this phenomenon extensively and have concluded that not more than 30 per cent of current global warming can be explained by the increase of sun spots. The other 70 percent is due to human activities.

Sources: Journal of Scientific Research (May 21, 2003), Nature (October 28, 2004)

3. Energy consumption will increase with 60 per cent

Energy demand will increase with 60 per cent until 2030. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA) carbon dioxide emissions will increase with the same percentage. IEA and UN experts stress it is crucial to study the maximum amount of greenhouse gasses that the atmosphere can manage. At a scientific level there are a lot of doubts about the precise amount of gases. In 2007 the UN will present a new report on the issue.

<http://www.worldenergyoutlook.org/media04.asp>

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4. Arctic region is warming up more rapidly

A four-year study of the Arctic region, conducted by an international team of 300 scientists, concludes the region is warming at nearly twice the rate as the rest of the globe, and increasing greenhouse gases from human activities are projected to make it warmer still. At least half the summer sea ice in the Arctic is projected to melt by the end of this century, along with a significant portion of the Greenland Ice Sheet, as the region is projected to warm an additional 4-7 degrees Celsius by 2100. These changes will have major global impacts, such as contributing to global sea-level rise and intensifying global warming, according to the final report of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA). The assessment's projections are based on a moderate estimate of future emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, and incorporate results from five major global climate models used by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment is a multi-year regional scientific assessment of nature and extent of climate change in the circumpolar Arctic that has just been released in November 2004. The Arctic Council is a high level inter-governmental forum. The key deliverable for that Chair was the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) Scientific Report and Overview Document. The main report - the ACIA Scientific Report - is not yet published, but is expected to be ready for early 2005. This will be a comprehensive document of more than 1000 pages, and is the result of an independent academic process involving more than 300 arctic scientists from Arctic Council member states and other European countries. The ACIA Overview Report was published earlier this month under the title 'Impacts of a Warming Arctic' early November. It is a 140 pages. A downloadable electronic version of the ACIA Overview Report is available at: <http://www.amap.no/acia>. The Arctic Council has released a policy response to ACIA, 24 November 2004 which also will be available at the mentioned link.

Source: Bluetooth News November 19, 2004, <http://www.caprep.com/1104025.htm>

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5. NASA helps to monitor global conservation

Space agency NASA will help to map the Earth in the name of conservation, the agency announced. NASA and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) signed an agreement to use the space agency's satellite system to monitor global environment change in the hope of preserving the planet. IUCN said remote-sensing technology would revolutionise the conservation struggle. NASA's 30 research satellites in orbit will be focused on monitoring natural and man-made changes around the world and assessing their impact. The satellites have to chart a new frontier in conservation by discovering unknown species of plants and animals, and pin-pointing their habitats.

Source: Planet Ark, November 19, 2004, <http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Newsroom/>

6. NASA's James Hansen: "US Administration stifles evidence on dangers of global warming"

The Bush administration is trying to stifle scientific evidence of the dangers of global warming in an effort to keep the public uninformed, a NASA scientist told a University of Iowa audience on 27 October. "In my more than three decades in government, I have never seen anything approaching the degree to which information flow from scientists to the public has been screened and controlled as it is now," said James E. Hansen, director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies. Hansen said the Bush administration wants to hear only scientific results that "fit predetermined, inflexible positions." Evidence that would raise concerns about the dangers of climate change is often dismissed as not being of sufficient interest to the public. Hansen: "This, I believe, is a recipe for environmental disaster." Hansen said such warnings are consistently suppressed, while studies that cast doubt on such interpretations receive favourable treatment from the administration. He also said reports that outline potential dangers of global warming are edited to make the problem appear less serious. "This process is in direct opposition to the most fundamental precepts of science," he said.

James Hansen was among the first experts recognising the role of the greenhouse effect in climate change. In 1988 he testified before the US Congress that there was "a strong cause and effect relationship between the current climate and human alteration of the atmosphere". Ever since, he is an authority in the global warming debate.

http://www.space.com/news/bush_warming_041027.html

<http://www.giss.nasa.gov/edu/qwdebate/>

http://www.co2science.org/edit/v5_edit/v5n29edit.htm

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7. Future EU climate change policy

Russia's move towards ratification of the Kyoto Protocol has reinvigorated the already active debate on the future of the EU and global climate change regime. The European Commission recently launched a web-based stakeholder consultation. This is a unique opportunity for stakeholders to contribute to the debate on the future of European and global climate policy. The consultation will feed into a report to be discussed in March 2005 at the European Spring Council.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/climat/future_action.htm

8. EU marine environment strategy shapes up

Tough enforcement measures for the EU's planned environmental marine strategy have not been ruled out, following talks between the European Commission and interested parties in Rotterdam this month. Head of the Commission's environment directorate Catherine Day gave a strong indication that binding measures could follow the strategy next year. "We may need a legal framework to guarantee that everyone will play their part", she said. But exactly what the framework would cover is not yet clear. Michael Scott of Scottish Natural Heritage and European environmental advisory councils group EEAC pointed out that some aspects of the strategy - such as halting biodiversity decline - would be almost impossible to police.

<http://www.helcom.fi/helcom/news/458.html>

9. North Sea Regional Advisory Council starts to work

The first meeting of the North Sea Regional Advisory Council (RAC) took place in Edinburgh, Scotland at 4 November. This RAC is the first out of seven councils that will advise the European Commission about the European Fishery policy. In this way, fisheries, consumers, environmental organisations and others are more involved in the policy-making.

<http://www.scottishexecutive.gov.uk/News/Releases/2004/11/04102400>

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10. 25 Years of implementation Birds Directive

The Birds Directive (1979) was the first significant step to address the loss and degradation of biodiversity in the EU. The Conference "Reinforcing our commitment to safeguarding Europe's Wild Birds and Their Habitats" held on 9 November in Bergen op Zoom, Netherlands, "celebrated" 25 years of Birds Directive. Some of the key results of this Directive are the establishment of an extensive network of special protection areas, already covering 8% of Europe's terrestrial territory as well as substantial inshore marine areas and the elimination of trade in wild birds as a pressure on their populations. Priority objectives for safeguarding Europe's wild birds and their habitats were set. Importance will be given to urgently complete the terrestrial network of Special Protection Areas (SPA) by 2005, full extension into the marine environment by 2008 and to achieve ecological connectivity.

http://www.eurosite-nature.org/IMG/pdf/boz_conc.pdf

11. COREPOINT: COastal REsearch & Policy INtegration -

Funded under the INTERREG IIIB programme, the Corepoint project includes 12 partners from Ireland, UK, France, Netherlands and Belgium. The principle goal is to establish Northwest Europe (NWE) as an Internationally Recognised Region of Excellence in Coastal Management. The expertise within the project consortium will be optimised to determine the effectiveness of current spatial policies for ICZM, implement best practice in ICZM, engage European decision-makers and citizens in ICZM and attain excellence in ICZM for NWE. A series of workshops, open days, field trips, networking activities and expert ICZM surgeries will take place. Combined with positive outcomes from the local studies implementing ICZM and support for the process among citizens will help influence decision-makers and national policy. EUCC is the only Dutch partner in the consortium and will road-test the ICZM Progress Indicator Set that it has developed in collaboration with the European Topic Centre for Terrestrial Environment. The kick-off meeting took place in Dublin, 25th & 26th November.

12. Second Stakeholder Conference on the Development of a European Marine Strategy

The recent stakeholder conference on the Development of a European Marine Strategy, held 10-12 November 2004, Rotterdam, the Netherlands, organized under The Netherlands' Presidency marked the end of the consultation period. As a result of the stakeholder process since December 2002, the European Commission presented the document "Thematic Strategy for the Protection and Conservation of the European Marine Environment" (European Marine Strategy, EMS) which served as the main basis for discussion at the conference. To support the further development of the strategy many recommendations and concerns have been expressed by the participants representing the regional seas conventions

(Barcelona, Black Sea, Helsinki and OSPAR), environmental NGOs, and European coastal countries. Some of the recommendations included relevant issues such as: the recognition of the value of the ecosystem approach to ensure protection and integrated management of the marine environment, a clear identification of the institutional structure within the 25 EU member states and the non-EU countries, and the crucial role of the regional seas conventions in the implementation. The expected benefits to be derived from existing measures, such as the Water Framework Directive, need to be clarified as a base line when starting to implement the strategy and joint efforts of establishing collective data sets and common assessments of the problems for the identification of measures to be taken should be encouraged.

<http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/env/marine/library?l=/stakeholdersmeetings&vm=detailed&sb=Title>

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– International news in brief –

13. Gas will be taken from Dutch Wadden Sea

The Dutch government has approved the exploitation of the natural gas reserves in the Wadden Sea. Since the area is protected under the EU Habitats Directive the possible damages of the gas exploitation (subsidence and loss of intertidal area) will have to be compensated. To this end the government will have to prepare a recovery plan for the region. From the estimated profits of the gas (about 10 billion euro) a special Wadden fund will be created to cover the costs of ecological recovery and of economic sustainability. NGOs including the EUCC have asked for at least 1 billion euro for this fund, the cabinet offered 500 million, and the Parliament recently demanded 800 million.

Various proposals have been made for ecological recovery by scientists and NGOs. The EUCC was among them and has stressed the importance of the seal populations (Common seal and Grey seal). After the second virus epidemic in ten years the seal population is doing well, however many experts see new epidemics as the biggest threat for the seal population.

14. Space sentinels track desertification on Mediterranean shores

The severe droughts and forest fires of recent years underline Mediterranean Europe's continuing vulnerability to desertification – 300 000 square kilometres of territory are currently affected, threatening the livelihoods of 16.5 million Europeans. A new satellite-based service is set to provide a continuous monitoring of regions most at risk. European Space Agency's DesertWatch project involves the development of a desertification monitoring system for the northern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, in support of responsible regional and national authorities.

http://www.innovations-report.com/html/reports/earth_sciences/report-36553.html

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– Publications –

Urban Flood Management

Edited by A. Szöllösi-Nagy and C. Zevenbergen (2005, IX + 148 pp). Taylor & Francis Group plc, London, UK. ISBN 04 1535 998 8.

The book comprises a multi-disciplinary survey of recent developments in the field of urban flood management. Subjects like urban planning, flood insurance, flood resilience, flood proofing techniques, risk perception & preparedness and flood forecasting are treated by authorities from Brazil, India, the US and Europe.

Water Footprints of Nations

UNESCO-IHE has published a new report "Water Footprints of Nations". The report contains a comprehensive assessment of the water needs for consumer goods, the average water needs of people per country, the virtual water flows between countries and the water import dependency per country. The report offers a rich source of data not published before.

The Water Footprint report can be downloaded as follows:

Main report: <http://www.waterfootprint.org/Reports/Report16Vol1.pdf> (2.5 MB)

Appendices: <http://www.waterfootprint.org/Reports/Report16Vol2.pdf> (1.4 MB)

Côtes en danger

Roland Paskoff, published by: l'Harmattan, ISBN: 2 7475 6926 8

Le Littoral de la Tunisie

Etude géoarchéologique et historique

Hédi Slim, Roland Paskoff and Ameur Oueslati, published by: CNRS Editions, ISBN : 2 271 06260 8

Las dunas de las costas de Chile

Roland Paskoff, Hermann Manríquez T. Published by : Instituto Geográfico militar de Chile, ISBN : 956 202 072 X

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UNFCCC 10th anniversary publication launched

To mark the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the Climate Change Convention, the secretariat published a special book: The First Ten Years. This publication provides an overview of actions taken during the past decade to combat climate change and mitigate its adverse effects. It looks at recent emissions trends and prospects, and considers how concern about climate change fits in with strategies for sustainable development. This publication can be downloaded at:

http://unfccc.int/essential_background/background_publications_htmlpdf/items/2625.php

– Newsletters and new websites –

EECONET Alliance

The provisional website of the EECONET Alliance has been launched in combination with the existing website of the EECONET Action Fund. In October, the EUCC, the ECNC and EUROSITE signed a Memorandum of Collaboration for the establishment of the EECONET Alliance. The common website address is: <http://www.eeconet.org>

Life EConet Project conclusions

The final outputs of the European funded Life EConet Project have now been produced. More information about the Life EConet Project can be found on the website: www.lifeeconet.com

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– Events and training, 1st Announcements –

This list only includes the 1st Announcements of conferences and training courses. For a complete overview of conferences please visit: <http://www.coastalguide.org/meetings> EUCC related conferences are added in boxes.

January 18, 2005 - Resource Centre, London, UK

Conference on Public Understanding of the Marine Environment

Contact: Lisa Browning phone (+44) 1489 774436, email: LisaB@hwt.org.uk

January 19-20, 2005 - University of London, SOAS, Russell Square, London

Coastal Futures 2005, Review and Future Trends

www.coastms.co.uk, contact: Bob Earll <bob.earll@coastms.co.uk>

January 31-February 1, 2005 - London, UK

World Wetlands Day Conference 2005: Wetlands – Focus on delivery

www.coastms.co.uk, contact: Bob Earll <bob.earll@coastms.co.uk>

February 1-4, 2005 - Fuerteventura, Canary Isles, Spain

Sustainable Tourism and Marine Protected Areas

This CoPraNet workshop is especially devoted to the preparation of a quality label for tourism destinations, highlighting environmental and sustainability milestones (or benchmarks). The workshop will also discuss options to improve information provision on sustainability issues to visitors.

<http://www.coastalpractice.net/>, contact: Ms. Yaiza Fernández Palacios yaizafv@iccm.rcanaria.es

February 14-18, 2005 - Perth, Australia

Indian Ocean Marine Environment Conference

<http://www.imarest.org/events/IOMEC2005/>

March 1-2, 2005 - Helsinki, Finland

26th Meeting of the Helsinki Commission

<http://www.helcom.fi/helcom/meetings.html>

March 16, 2005 - Brussels, Belgium

Erika, Prestige, Baltic Carrier – Is Maritime Safety Under Control? The Example of the Baltic Sea Region

<http://www.cpmr.org/>

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March 21-22, 2005 - Centre for Mathematical Sciences, Cambridge, UK

UK marineXML, 2-day workshop

<http://www.niees.ac.uk/events/marinexml/>

April 4-8, 2005 - Esbjerg, Denmark

11th Scientific Wadden Sea Symposium

<http://www.waddensea-secretariat.org/news/symposia/Esbjerg2005/Esbjerg-2005.html>

April 17-20, 2005 - Vilamoura, Algarve, Portugal

International Conference on Coastal Conservation and Management in the Atlantic and Mediterranean

Info : ICCCM2005 Secretariat, Tel: 351 966055637, E-mail: icccm2005_as@aeiou.pt

Internet: <http://icccm2005.tripod.com>

May 6-7, 2005 - Hamburg, Germany

The Pollutions of the Seas – Prevention and Compensation

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May 8-11, 2005 - Charleston, South Carolina, USA

Solutions to Coastal Disasters 2005

<http://www.asce.org/conferences/cd05/> or e-mail to Dona Christensen: copri@asce.org

May 15-19, 2005 - Miami, Florida

19th Biennial International Oil Spill Conference

<http://www.iosc.org/>

May 23-25, 2005 - Risø, Denmark

Risø International Energy Conference

<http://www.risoe.dk/konferencer/energyconf05/>

July 7-9, 2005 - Amsterdam, The Netherlands

People and the Sea III, New Directions in Coastal and Maritime Studies, Conference

<http://www.marecentre.nl>

August 21-27, 2005 - Stockholm, Sweden

World Water Week

www.siwi.org or www.worldwaterweek.org

August 31 – September 2, 2005 – London, UK

Coastal and Marine Working Group (CMWG) sessions at the Royal Geographical Society Conference

www.rgs.org

October 25-29, 2005 - Kusadasi, Turkey

Seventh International Conference on the Mediterranean Coastal Environment, MEDCOAST 05

www.medcoast.org.tr

October 26–28, 2005 - Copenhagen, Denmark

OffshoreWind Conference 2005

<http://offshore.windpower.org/>

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– Colophon –

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