

Press Release

Communication Unit of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities

Ref:610a08

Tel : +33 3 90 21 49 36

Fax : +33 3 88 41 27 51

congress.com@coe.int

www.coe.int/congress



Open Days 2008: the Black Sea between co-operation and conflict

47 members

Albania
Andorra
Armenia
Austria
Azerbaijan
Belgium
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Georgia
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Iceland
Ireland
Italy
Latvia
Liechtenstein
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta
Moldova
Monaco
Montenegro
Netherlands
Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Russia
San Marino
Serbia
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
"the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"
Turkey
Ukraine
United Kingdom

Strasbourg, 04.09.2008 - Are conflicts around the Black Sea area inevitable? Is there any conceivable future for co-operation among States, regions and towns around this Sea?

The Black Sea Basin is currently marked by the persistence of four "frozen conflicts", which represent a potential threat for the region itself and more broadly for the whole of Europe, namely Southern Ossetia, Abkhazia, Transnistria and Nagorno-Karabakh.

At the crossroads of Asia and Europe, the Black Sea Basin presents considerable potential for co-operation, but it remains an area of deep political division, which makes it particularly fragile.

The Round Table organised by the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities as part of the Open Days of the EU Committee of the Regions will be considering the prospects for economic and cultural co-operation among the towns and regions of the Black Sea Basin, and will provide an opportunity for gauging the potential of such co-operation for blocking the dangerous mechanism of inter-State conflict.

Quentin Dickinson, journalist and Director of European Affairs with Radio France, will be chairing this debate, which will be attended by Ministers from States in the region and local and regional authority officials, as well as a number of experts on geopolitics.

The Round Table will kick off at 4.45 pm on Wednesday 8 October 2008 in Room JDE 52 (Committee of the Regions, "Jacques Delors" Building, Rue Belliard 99-101).

Anyone wishing to attend the Round Table and debate must register on line at <http://www.coe.int/congress-OpenDays>

Contact: Dmitri Marchenkov, Congress Communication Unit,
Tel. +33 (0)3 88 41 38 44 ; Mobile : +33 (0)6 75 65 03 49 ;
dmitri.marchenkov@coe.int

The Congress has two chambers, the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions.

It brings together 318 full and 318 substitute members representing more than 200 000 European territorial communities.

President of the Congress : Yavuz Milden (Turkey, EPP/CD), President of the Chamber of Regions: Ludmila Sfirloaga (Romania, SOC),

President of the Chamber of Local Authorities : Ian Micallef (Malta, EPP/CD).

Political Groups : Socialist Group (**SOC**), Group of the European People's Party – Christian Democrats (**EPP/CD**), Independent and Liberal Democrat Group (**ILDG**).