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NEXT Black Sea Basin

Developing Ukraine's Blue Economy: Challenges and Regional Context

*Restoring Maritime Capacity • Strengthening Regional Cooperation •
Building Sustainable Growth*

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Immediate War-Induced Challenges

Port closures and blockades: Key ports like Mariupol have been shut down or occupied, and even Odesa's ports faced blockades and missile attacks, halting regular operations

Maritime security risks: The Black Sea became a conflict zone, with sea mines drifting and threats of vessel attacks.

Export disruption and economic losses: Ukraine's economy, heavily reliant on maritime trade, suffered from the restriction of access to global markets.

Environmental damage from the conflict: The war has inflicted significant ecological harm in the Black Sea and coastal zones. Missile strikes and the destruction of infrastructure (such as oil depots and ships) have led to oil spills and chemical pollution.

Long-Term Structural Challenges

Policy Gaps and Governance Weaknesses:

- lack of maritime spatial planning (MSP);
- legal alignment with EU standards;

Underinvestment in Infrastructure and Technology

Environmental Degradation and Climate Risks

Institutional Coordination and Capacity:

- limited administrative resources, overlapping mandates, and incomplete decentralization funding constraints, delayed adoption of legislation, corruption;
- lack of human capital and expertise;

Sector-Specific Challenges

Maritime Transport and Shipping:

- security of routes;
- decarbonizing and modernizing maritime transport;

Fisheries and Aquaculture

Port Modernization and Logistics:

- green ports;
- reimagining of multimodal transportation processes;

Pollution Control and Marine Environmental Protection:

- wastewater treatment, solid waste management, oil/chemical spill prevention;
- Marine protected areas (MPAs);
- World Bank's "Blueing the Black Sea" initiative;

Sector-Specific Challenges

Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and Coastal Zone Management:

- Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)

Blue Innovation and Diversification:

- offshore wind energy;
- marine biotechnology/blue bio-economy;
- blue skills development;

Ukraine's Position Relative to Other Black Sea Countries

Bulgaria and Romania (EU Member States): These two countries have had the advantage of EU membership since 2007, which brought access to EU funds, infrastructure investments, and the requirement to adopt EU legislation.

Türkiye: It is not an EU member and thus not bound by EU maritime or environmental directives, but it is a key player in regional maritime affairs.

Georgia: Georgia, like Ukraine, is an aspiring EU candidate (it applied in 2022) and a Black Sea littoral state with a relatively small blue economy.

Aligning Challenges with Regional and EU Initiatives

Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) for the Black Sea:

- healthy marine ecosystems;
- a competitive and sustainable blue economy;
- investment in the blue economy;

EU Green Deal and Sustainable Blue Economy objectives:

- decarbonizing maritime activities;
- circular economy and pollution reduction;
- biodiversity and restoration;

EU Black Sea Strategy adopted in 2025

The World Bank's Blueing the Black Sea program

What will help Ukraine to succeed?

- Peace;
- Partnership and EU's family support;
 - Investments;
 - Innovations;
- Reimagination of Ukraine's general approach to Blue Economy;
 - Unity of all parties involved;

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