



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
ENVIRONMENT
Directorate F – Green Diplomacy & Multilateralism
The Director

Brussels
ENV.F/AS

Subject: PETITION – Dredging in the Bystroe Channel in Danube Delta

Dear Petitioner,

Thank you for your message to Commissioner Sinkevičius, who asked me to reply on his behalf.

The European Commission is well aware of the concerns related to the operation of the Bystroe Channel. Relevant Commission services are raising this issue continuously with the Ukrainian authorities, both in the context of discussions on transport and on environment. Environmental considerations are a vital part of maintaining and operating the Bystroe Channel and should be regarded by the Ukrainian side as a priority.

The relevant multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention), the Council of Europe's Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) have to be respected.

The European Commission advocates for carrying out environmental impact assessments before any major works, including those with impacts on river flows, birds and fish, and also those with transboundary impacts.

The European Commission considers that Ukraine should respect the environmental provisions of the EU - Ukraine Association Agreement which are applicable to the management of water bodies, for example the Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment Directives, the Water Framework Directive, the Birds and Habitats Directives and others.

The European Commission will continue to monitor the situation and encourage Ukraine and Romania to agree on satisfactory and mutually acceptable solutions with regard to the Bystroe Channel, taking into account the environmental situation in the Danube Delta.

Yours faithfully,

Electronically signed

Astrid SCHOMAKER