

VITAL CASPIAN CHALLENGES BEYOND CAVIAR GRAPHICS



The **United Nations Environment Programme**, as the world's leading intergovernmental environmental organization, is the authoritative source of knowledge on the current state of, and trends shaping the global environment. The mission of UNEP is to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations (<http://www.unep.org/>).

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The **Caspian Environment Programme** (CEP) is a regional umbrella programme developed for and by the five Caspian Littoral States: Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan, aiming to halt the deterioration of environmental conditions of the Caspian Sea and to promote sustainable development in the area (<http://www.caspianenvironment.org>). The CEP is funded by the Caspian littoral governments and the International community through the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) (of which United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Bank are the implementing agencies), the European Union / Tacis and the growing participation of the private sector.

For purposes of this publication, the names Iran and Russia have been used to refer to the Islamic Republic of Iran and Russian Federation, respectively.

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Published by UNEP/GRID-Arendal
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ISBN: 82-7701-039-7

Printed by Birkeland Trykkeri A/S in Birkeland, Norway on chlorine-free, recycled paper with 100% plant based ink.



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The Caspian Sea runs north and south, extending over 1,200 km, with an average width of 320 km. It covers approximately 400,000 sq km (an area slightly larger than Germany). The population of the region is about 14 million, distributed over the coastal provinces of five countries: 6.5 million in Iran, 3.9 million in Russia, 2.2 million in Azerbaijan, 0.8 million in Kazakhstan and 0.4 million in Turkmenistan.



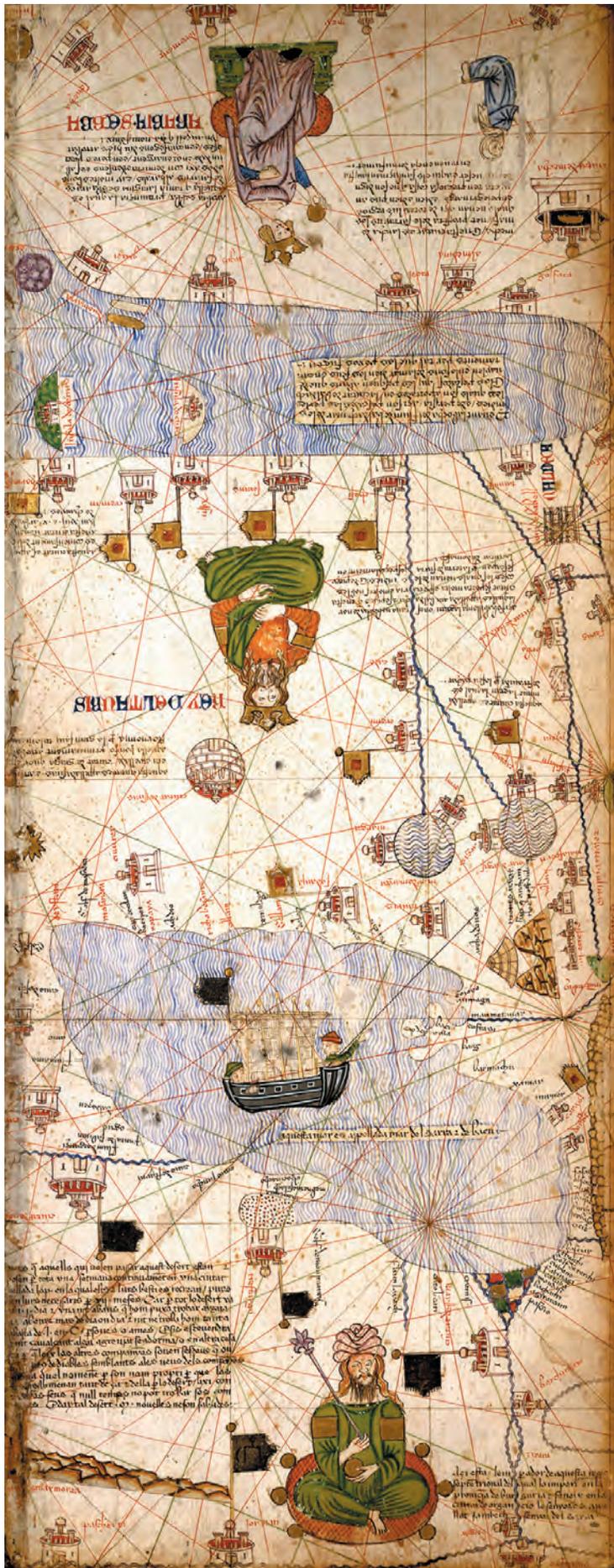


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GRAPHICS

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A FRAGILE BALANCE



The Caspian Sea region represented in the Catalan Atlas (1375)
(Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris)

Foreword

“I wanted to write a book as purely geographical in character, as dry and uncompromising as a travel report, and no more attractive than a rough-and-ready map sketched out with a lump of coal on a piece of packing paper.”

Konstantin Paustovsky

Story of a Life, vol 6,
The Restless Years

It is a real achievement that the five countries around the Caspian Sea have signed and ratified the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea (Tehran Convention) and thus establish a framework to jointly address and solve environmental problems in and around the world's largest body of inland water. Negotiating this agreement was a difficult task. The countries themselves, and the international community, have invested considerable energy and money in the various processes involved. This is not surprising, since the words “environment” and “protection” alone may stir up feelings in a region rich in oil and other natural resources of global relevance and vital for the region's development.

Much work has yet to be done to keep the involvement of the parties going, not only those directly involved in negotiations, but also their constituencies, including the people around the Caspian Sea. For its part the international community must stay committed to these issues of global geopolitical concern. To reach a wider audience, the Caspian Environment Programme (CEP), in close cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and GRID-Arendal, is publishing these Vital Caspian Graphics. Our ambition is to provide a broad picture, in a concise and highly visual form, of issues relevant to the environment of the Caspian Sea and the surrounding area, including security, geopolitics and the exploration of natural resources. Though easy to look at and read, the graphics are nevertheless based on reliable scientific data and facts.

To supplement them we are re-publishing several newspaper articles relevant to the topics highlighted here. They do not reflect any official view of the publishing organisations, but they shed additional – subjective – light on the region's concerns.

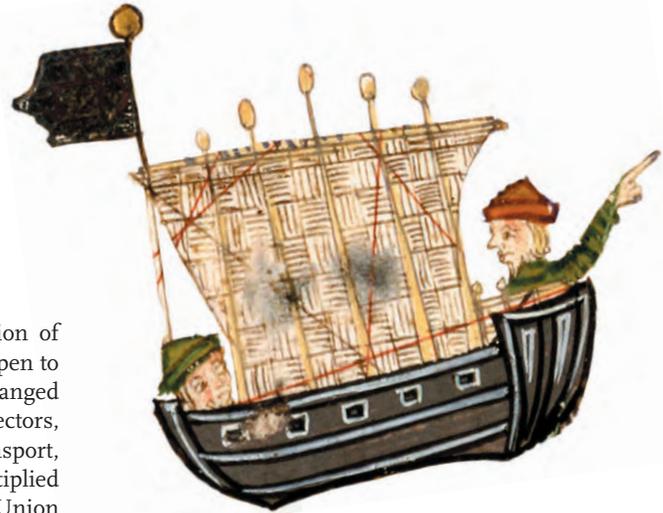
In the production process we have sought inspiration from writers such as Konstantin Paustovsky, who reached millions with his novel *Kara Bogaz* (1928) – however close to propaganda and anti-environmental its message may seem – or Frank Westerman's more recent *Ingenieurs van de ziel* (2002), a lucid analysis of Soviet hydraulic engineering and its relation to literature (and vice versa). Their investigative drive, curiosity, and, no less importantly, presence in the area are an inspiration. Too often the work of international organisations is carried out well away from “the field”, and thus remains inaccessible to many.

Just as our investigative efforts must stay closely connected to the ground, the results of our assessments must be brought back to the field, so that the information reaches those most immediately concerned. The maps and graphics presented here use a universal language, enabling them to reach out into the streets of Astrakhan and Aktau, into the textbooks of Azerbaijan and Iran. Information is a first step towards taking part and seizing the initiative to improve the situation, both for the inhabitants and their environment.

Otto Simonett, April 2006

A sea of many ambitions

In recent years the Caspian Sea has been the focus of increased global attention. The world-wide decline in oil and gas reserves and the corresponding rise in the price of hydrocarbon derivatives have heightened interest in an area where there is still growth potential in oil and gas exploration. In addition, the region presents a wealth of opportunities in other areas, including bioresources, transport corridors, and not least ecotourism. These new ventures may bring increased prosperity, but they also put pressure on traditional rural communities and the environment.



The expected surge in the exploitation of hydrocarbons in an area once more open to foreign investors has completely changed the rules for development in many sectors, in particular oil, land and sea transport, and services. National interests multiplied after the breakdown of the Soviet Union as Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan gained independence. Relationships between these states are being tested as the

region. Otherwise the area remained largely rural, on the margins of two vast states (Tsarist Russia and Persia

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https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_11089

