

TURKISH-RUSSIAN DECLARATION ON OPERATION BLACK SEA HARMONY

On March 1st 2004, Turkey launched Operation Black Sea Harmony (OBSH) in the Black Sea, in accordance with the principles stated in the UN Charter and the objectives set forth in the UN Security Council Resolutions 1373, 1540, and 1566, which call upon all states to cooperate in the framework of global efforts to deter, disrupt and prevent the threat of terrorism and illicit trafficking in weapons of mass destruction (WMD), their means of delivery and related materials.

On 27 December 2006, the Russian Federation joined Operation Black Sea Harmony.

The mission of Operation Black Sea Harmony is to;- Demonstrate naval presence in the traffic routes of merchant shipping and conduct systematic surveillance operations in maritime jurisdiction areas of the Russian Federation and Turkey respectively.

- Exchange information on merchant vessels suspected of being involved in terrorism-related activities, illicit trafficking in weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and related materials, other illegal activities creating maritime risks,
- Conduct reconnaissance operations when needed,
- Trail/shadow suspected merchant vessels,
- Take appropriate action by relevant authorities for boarding and searching suspected vessels, based on the consent of the flag state and captain.

Operation Black Sea Harmony is coordinated with other relevant governmental and intergovernmental bodies of respective states.

This Operation will continue to be conducted in cooperation with the ongoing NATO Operation Active Endeavor in the Mediterranean, which is actively supported by the navies of Turkey and the Russian Federation. The effectiveness of OBSH has been recognized and appreciated by NATO military authorities as well as NATO member and Partner countries.

All Black Sea littoral states have been invited to participate in OBSH. We strongly believe that their participation will greatly contribute to maritime security in the Black Sea, as well as to ensuring energy security in the region. Therefore, Turkey and the Russian Federation will consider OBSH as a model that could be used by BLACKSEAFOR in due course as well. They continue to seek full cooperation and coordination among all Black Sea littorals in this field.