



*Information submitted by Romania for inclusion in the
Register of Damage in the Lower Danube Region*

The conflict triggered in 2022 by the Russian Federation's military attacks on Ukraine has generated significant transformations in the maritime trade dynamics in the Black Sea region, prompting the reconfiguration of trade routes and accentuating the role of alternative logistics nodes.

In this context, although the Port of Constanta has seen a considerable increase in strategic relevance, this development is accompanied by a set of complex risks, affecting both the operational and strategic dimensions of the port activity.

1. Damage caused by military attacks

1.1 Direct damage caused by military actions can significantly affect both port infrastructure and the conduct of maritime operations. These effects are complex in nature, with economic, logistical and security implications.

First, port infrastructure is at risk of direct damage/destruction. Essential elements such as terminals, quays, cargo handling facilities, specific operating equipment, including cranes, transport systems, energy infrastructure, may be affected by military attacks or the indirect effects of the conflict.

There is a risk of systemic damage to port infrastructure, even in the absence of direct attacks on the port. Proximity to the conflict zone can generate accelerated equipment wear, caused by increased use, increased operational pressure and limited maintenance activities. Over time, these conditions may lead to reduced operational capacity and increased vulnerability of the infrastructure in the long term.

1.2 Ships and goods in transit may suffer significant damage. In the context of a conflict, there is a risk that ships will be damaged or even destroyed both while sailing and while in port. Similarly, cargoes can be compromised, resulting in direct economic losses for economic operators and affecting the stability of international logistics chains.

1.3 Risks encountered to staff safety. Port workers and ship crews are exposed to increased dangers in the context of a military conflict, which may lead to reduced activity, temporary suspension of operations or implementation of strict security measures. These measures, although necessary, may affect the pace and operational efficiency of the port.

1.4 Factors limiting maritime trade and free navigation in the Black Sea

In addition to direct risks, the conflict generates a number of structural factors that significantly affect maritime trade and freedom of navigation in the Black Sea.

A first factor is the increased risk of navigation due to the presence of marine mines, militarised areas and isolated incidents in the region. These conditions lead shipping companies to avoid

certain routes or opt for longer alternative routes, which entails additional costs and reduced efficiency.

At the same time, the increase in insurance and transport costs, associated with the classification of the Black Sea as a high-risk area, affects the competitiveness of trade routes involving the Port of Constanta. As a result, economic operators may decide to redirect trade flows to other ports or logistic corridors perceived as safer.

Infrastructure congestion is another significant factor. The increase in cargo volumes, in particular flows from Ukraine, can put considerable pressure on existing logistics capacities. In the absence of a proportionate development of rail and road infrastructure, this leads to bottlenecks, delays and lower operational efficiency.

At the same time, geopolitical uncertainty amplifies the vulnerability of the logistics system, affecting strategic and investment planning. In this context, instability leads to a reduction in predictability and a shift in trade flows towards regions perceived as more stable.

2. Direct/indirect damage to port activity

In economic terms, the impact of the conflict materialises in a series of quantifiable direct damages. The suspension of cruise traffic has led to the underutilisation of the Passenger Terminal in the Port of Constanta, resulting in estimated financial losses of between EUR 2 and 5 million annually.

The increase in war insurance premiums also increased logistics costs by about 10-20% per call, affecting the competitiveness of the port. In addition, the additional operational costs resulting from increased security measures, congestion and delays are estimated at EUR 5-10 million annually.

Indirectly, infrastructure overload leads to accelerated wear and tear of port equipment and increases the likelihood of failures. This affects the continuity of operations and reduces operational efficiency by prolonging handling times and increasing the frequency of technical interruptions.

3. Impact on maritime trade and navigation

All these factors lead to a significant deterioration of navigation conditions and maritime trade dynamics in the Black Sea region. The increase in risks, costs and uncertainty leads to a reduction in the economic attractiveness of maritime routes transiting through this area.

The armed conflict triggered by the Russian Federation against Ukraine in February 2022 blocked access to most Ukrainian Black Sea ports (Odessa, Pivdennyi, Chornomorsk, Izmail, etc.) in the first phase (2022 - first half of 2023).

As a result of this situation, a significant part of the trade flows of goods (in particular Ukrainian cereals, oilseeds and other agricultural products) was temporarily redirected to alternative land and mixed routes, called Solidarity Lanes by the European Union.

These routes directed significant volumes to ports in the Baltic Sea (e.g. Gdansk - Poland) and the Adriatic Sea (e.g. Trieste - Italy, Koper - Slovenia), as well as to the Port of Constanta, via the Danube and rail/road routes.

Initially, the Port of Constanta witnessed a substantial increase in Ukrainian transit traffic, taking over a significant part of the redirected volumes from Ukraine's exports, and since August 2023, with the opening by Ukraine of an alternative navigation corridor on the west coast of the Black Sea and the gradual resumption of operations in Ukrainian ports (facilitated by partial security agreements and new export routes), there has been a gradual return of trade flows to these routes.

4. The Romanian Agency for the Salvation of Human Life at Sea (ARSVOM) reported that the sinking of the vessel M/V SEAMA, flying the flag of Togo, in the Sulina area resulted in damage amounting to EUR 363 332.42, consisting of SAR/DEPOL intervention activities (depollution expenditure) carried out between 20 September 2023 and 5 October 2024.