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MARCH 2013

PROPOSAL DOCUMENT FROM THE CPMR GENERAL SECRETARIAT

**ESTABLISHING THE TECHNICAL ORGANISATION
OF THE BALKAN AND BLACK SEA COMMISSION**

1 - Context: challenges and opportunities

The BBSRC is one of the six Geographical Commissions of the CPMR. It is the most recent and it faces the greatest challenges in the following areas:

- Geographical scope: the Adriatic coast to the extreme East of the Black Sea;
- The Member Regions belong to States with differing statuses: EU Members, candidate countries, neighbouring countries;
- Very different levels of economic development, with a strong representation of Regions whose development is lagging behind;
- A general lack of attention is paid by the European Union to the Black Sea;
- The Regions have various skills and levels of independence and often have insufficient political and administrative abilities to be able to participate individually in international debates and decisions.

This area also has real opportunities:

- The Eastern partnership, which generates the shared interest of the EU and the neighbouring countries concerned, in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy;
- The sustained economic growth in Turkey;
- A key geostrategic situation in the field of energy;
- A European strategy for the Danube under development and an emerging Adriatic-Ionian strategy.

It is within this context that these proposals are made. The areas in which the regional authorities can already “produce EU added value together” should be selected, building on strengths and preparing quality projects and proposals.

2 – Select the areas of intervention for the BBSRC and identify thematic responsibilities

All the Geographical Commissions have carried out work to select areas that they could invest in and work on. The BBSRC must do this, according to its characteristics and the EU policies which concern it the most. Each area of work must be supported by a Region, which will organise the work with the support of the CPMR Secretariat and the BBSRC (or by a couple of Regions, one of which be the Lead Region).

In choosing the priorities, those of the European programme that corresponds the most to BBSRC membership must be taken into consideration: the Black Sea Basin cross-border cooperation programme. Experience shows that it is by backing trans-national programmes that the CPMR Geographical Commissions have been able to develop, such as the AAC, the NSC and the IMC.

In the 2007-2013 programme, the following measures seem well-adapted to an involvement of the BBSRC (these measures will no doubt be reviewed in the 2014-2020 programme, but this list gives some useful indications):

- Develop accessibility and connectivity;
- Promote the tourist network, products and initiatives;
- Work as a network on the environmental protection of rivers and marine systems;
- Promote initiatives in the field of the management of solid waste and water treatment;
- People to people cooperation: promote exchanges and networks in the fields of culture and education.

These themes of the cooperation programme that are of a technical nature must be completed by more "strategic" themes such as "macro-regional strategies" or "energy issues".

The General Assembly in Odessa will enable the priorities of the BBSRC to be chosen, within or outside of the themes below. Hypothesis proposed by the CPMR Secretariat:

- Accessibility and maritime transport;
- People to people cooperation – possibly including tourism issues;
- Cooperation on maritime and coastal issues;
- Macro-regional strategies: on this issue, 3 Regions could co-coordinate (but with one leader), one from the Danube, one from the Black Sea, one from the Adriatic-Ionian.

3 – Provide each working group with an organisational structure and a work schedule for two years

During its first meeting, each working group will adopt its Terms of Reference, specific priorities and a timetable for action over two years. The CPMR Secretariat and the BBSRC will provide technical assistance to each Lead Region in the preparation of these and ensure that the timetables are consistent from one working group to another and with the BBSRC calendar.

The composition of the working group is important. The participants must have genuine expertise and experience on the subjects dealt with in order to guarantee the quality of the proposals and positions that will be drawn up. A number of these will be used in particular by the CPMR to further develop its own technical papers and policy positions. Experience shows that it is preferable that working groups are only launched once it is guaranteed that they will be sufficiently equipped technically. This expertise can also be obtained by calling on external experts who, even if they are not from regional governments, share the objectives of the BBSRC. These details may, if necessary, be laid down in the Terms of Reference of the group.

Each Lead Region will report on the results obtained to the annual General Assembly of the BBSRC.

4 – Participate in the CPMR thematic working groups

The policy positions and technical papers drawn up by the CPMR are, in most cases, prepared in the framework of specialised working groups, bringing together experts from the various Geographical Commissions.

The General Assembly in Odessa will appoint the BBSRC representatives in these CPMR working groups.

5 – Provide the BBSRC with a genuine medium-term Business Plan

Given the strong heterogeneity of the area, it would be premature to prepare a strategy and business plan in the medium term (5/7 years) for the BBSRC from early 2013. The General Secretariat suggests a "bottom up" method for progress in these areas. After this new technical organisation has been in operation for one year, an update can be made and give rise to the preparation of a medium-term plan, which will be implemented during the next programming period of European policies: 2014 - 2020.

It is ultimately a question of including the BBSRC among the key players in the international issues and debates in the Balkans and Black Sea.

6 – Timetable to be discussed

26 April 2013 Odessa:

- Choice of themes for the BBSRC working groups and appointment of Lead Regions;
- Appointment of the BBSRC representatives in the CPMR working groups.

Autumn 2013: first meeting of the working groups; adoption of the priorities, Terms of Reference and a calendar.

Winter 2013/2014: second meeting of the working groups.

General Assembly in spring 2014: review of the working groups, preparation of a medium-term Business Plan for the BBSRC.

Pre-CPMR General Assembly meeting in October 2014 in Sweden: adoption of the BBSRC Business Plan.

During the period covered by this timetable, other meeting must be held, in particular in the framework of the 2014-2020 Black Sea Basin programme and its preparation.