# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>2019 Annual General Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Memoranda of Understanding, Cooperation Agreement, Collaboration with Other Think Tanks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Maritime Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Transport and Accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Adriatic-Ionian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Black Sea Synergy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Cultural and Creative Regional Ecosystems (CCRE-S3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Other Conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Cooperation Projects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2019 ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

On 12 April 2019, the members of the CPMR Balkan and Black Sea Commission held their Annual General Assembly in Tulcea (Romania) at the kind invitation of the President of Tulcea County Council, Mr Horia Teodorescu.

Ms Christiana Kalogirou, then Regional Governor of North Aegean (Greece) was successfully and unanimously re-elected for a two-year term, with Mr Valentin Moldoveanu, Tulcea County Councillor, being nominated as First Vice-President for the period 2019-2021.

Besides dealing with administrative and statutory matters, the 2019 BBSC General Assembly focused mainly on blue growth and sustainable transport in the wider Black Sea and the opportunities these sectors offer to capitalise on the area’s untapped potential. This sparked interest among numerous representatives attending the meeting from local and regional authorities – both members and non-members of the Commission – ministries, maritime and research organisations, EU institutions, civil society, and universities.

The topics raised during this year’s General Assembly attracted a strong participation from several Romanian ministries’ representatives, including H.E. Sirma Caraman, Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Public Administration, H.E. Dumitru Daniel Botânoiu, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr Andrei Chivu, Head of Unit, POIM Projects Monitoring Unit, Ministry of European Funds, and not forgetting Mrs Mirela Furtună, Member of the Romanian Parliament.

The Commission had a great opportunity to welcome Mrs Magdalena Andreea Strâchinescu Olteanu, Head of Unit at the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE – European Commission), who provided an update on the trends and challenges around the Black Sea in the fields of the blue growth, climate change, energy, research, innovation and education, as well as the future Blue Invest Platform.

The day was also an occasion to exchange best practices, especially through presentations of on-going EU projects, and examine the innovative and competitive entrepreneurship methods helping to alleviate common challenges such as brain drain and economic development issues.

Participants showed interest in supporting multi-actor networking activities and creating synergies in all these areas, in order to develop projects and cooperation and increase the skills and knowledge of young people, students and public servants from regional and local authorities in the area.

Mr Valentin Moldoveanu has been Acting President since late 2019, as Ms Christiana Kalogirou lost her regional mandate at the regional elections that took place in Greece in 2019. The 2020 BBSC Annual General Assembly was not held, due to the extraordinary sanitary situation.

In 2020, the BBSC welcomed the participation of new Member Regions: Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti and Ajara (Georgia), and Kherson (Ukraine).
MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING, COOPERATION AGREEMENT, COLLABORATION WITH OTHER THINK TANKS

In the current period, the CPMR and its BBSC have two Memoranda of Understanding and one Cooperation Agreement.

The CPMR and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), sectoral dialogue partners since 2009, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2017. Since the signature of this MoU, the CPMR and BSEC PERMIS (Permanent International Secretariat of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation) cooperation on several areas including Transport (Maritime Transport, & Accessibility), Social & Economic Cohesion, Environment & Energy, Tourism, Trade, Economic Development and SMEs, Science and Technology, and Information & Communication Technologies has been even closer.

The CPMR and the Black Sea Association of Maritime Institutions (BSAMI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2020, aiming at further development of projects and initiatives with regards to the common interests of BSAMI and CPMR Members, in fields such as Maritime Education and Training, Transport, Tourism, Youth, Science and Technology.

The CPMR and the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) signed a Cooperation Agreement in the framework of the 47th General Assembly of the CPMR, which was kindly hosted in Palermo by the Region of Sicily (Italy).

This Agreement is a valid continuation of the interactive cooperation that the CPMR and the ICBSS have established. The CPMR’s Balkan & Black Sea Commission (BBSC) and the ICBSS have mutual interest to promote constructive dialogue within the wider Black Sea Region among all relevant stakeholders, Regional and Local Authorities, public and private sectors, industry, academia, and civil society.

The CPMR participates in the Network of Think Tanks on the Eastern Partnership, established in 2020. This network aims to engage leading think tanks, policy experts, and policy-makers from the 27 EU Member States and the 6 Eastern Partnership countries, and beyond, in an on-going inclusive, coordinated, and systematic dialogue on the EU’s post-2020 eastern policy. The network supports structured dialogue among stakeholders with interest in the development of EU policy in relation to the Eastern Partnership.
MARITIME AFFAIRS

This section includes:
- The common maritime agenda for the Black Sea
- EU Mission Area
- SEARICA Intergroup
- European Maritime Day
- And participation in maritime-focused events
COMMON MARITIME AGENDA FOR THE BLACK SEA

The CPMR is fully associated, as observer, with the Steering Group of the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea.

The CPMR BBSC was represented by Mr Tornike Rijvadze, Chairman of the Ajara Autonomous Republic Government (Georgia) and CPMR Vice-President responsible for Neighbourhood Policy, at the Common Maritime Agenda Regional Stakeholders’ Conference, held online on 10 December 2020, and hosted by the Bulgarian Presidency of the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA), in partnership with the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) and the European Commission.

The Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea (CMA) 2020 Regional Stakeholders Conference was the first regional event organised following the signature of the Bucharest Ministerial Declaration in May 2019 and the subsequent launch of the CMA implementation in February 2020, under the Bulgarian yearly coordination.

The Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea covers seven countries (i.e. Bulgaria, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine) and the 2020 Regional Stakeholders Conference built on the main outcomes of the previous conference held in Istanbul in 2019.

The high-level event was opened by Mr Rossen Jeliazkov, Bulgarian Minister of Transport, Information Technology and Communications, followed by a key message of Ms Charlina Vitcheva, Director-General of the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), European Commission, and a keynote speech of Ambassador Michael B. Christides, Secretary General of the Permanent International Secretariat.

PERMIS), Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) – CPMR’s MoU co-signatory and sectoral dialogue partner.

Mr Rijvadze participated in the high-level panel moderated by Mr Christos Economou, Deputy Director for Maritime Policy and Blue Economy, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), European Commission, which, with the participation of Ms Nadezhda Buhova, Director of European Coordination and International Cooperation Directorate, Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications, Bulgarian CMA coordination, Ms Petra Gombalova, Head of Division Eastern Partnership, Regional Cooperation and OSCE, European External Action Service, and Ms Sieglinde Gruber, then Head of Unit for Healthy Oceans and Seas, Directorate-General Research and Innovation (DG RTD), European Commission, discussed challenges in maritime transport, coastal and maritime tourism, and fisheries and aquaculture sectors, including the initial known impacts of COVID-19 and the opportunities to redesign sustainable development models.

Mr Rijvadze underlined the expertise and actions of the CPMR and its BBSC in the maritime field, and its participation as an observer in the Black Sea Common Maritime Agenda’s Steering Group meetings, bringing in the Regional Authorities’ perspective and serving as a link so that we contribute to the implementation of its objectives, and the only Association of Regions actively involved in both the Common Maritime Agenda and Sea Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda for the Black Sea, making sure that the voice of the CPMR Member Regions is heard and that their common interests are well promoted.
Mr Valentin Moldoveanu, Acting President of the BBSC, has been representing the CPMR and its BBSC as a Member of the Mission Board for Healthy Oceans, Seas, Coastal and Inland Waters.

EU missions are commitments to solve some of the greatest challenges facing our world like fighting cancer, adapting to climate change, protecting our oceans, living in greener cities and ensuring soil health and food.

The EU missions are an integral part of the Horizon Europe framework programme beginning in 2021. Each mission has been operating as a portfolio of actions – such as research projects, policy measures or even legislative initiatives – to achieve a measurable goal that could not be achieved through individual actions, in order to contribute to the goals of the European Green Deal as well as the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr Moldoveanu has contributed to the “Mission Starfish 2030: Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030” report, of the Mission Board on Healthy Oceans, Seas, Coastal and Inland Waters. Inspired by the shape of the starfish, the Mission Starfish 2030 has five overarching objectives for 2030: (i) Filling the knowledge and emotional gap, (ii) regenerating marine and freshwater ecosystems, (iii) zero pollution, (iv) decarbonising our ocean, and waters (v) revamping governance.

These five objectives are mutually supportive and taken together, the Mission Starfish 2030 will enable the restoration of the water cycle as a whole. For each of the five objectives, a set of ambitious, concrete and measurable targets has been defined. They specifically address the actors, activities, tools and systems that all need to be called upon to reach each objective. These targets are considered the indispensable components of a holistic approach to systemic change.
The Seas, Rivers, Islands and Coastal Areas Intergroup follows on from the Seas and Coastal Areas Intergroup launched in 2010 and for the current European Parliament term brings together 107 MEPs from 23 different Member States and 6 political groups. The CPMR has been holding the Secretariat of the SEArica Intergroup.

Relevant EU policies and initiatives related to maritime topics, such as the Blue Growth Strategy and the Framework for Maritime Spatial Planning, coordinated under the Integrated Maritime Policy, as well as the different Sea Basin Strategies and, more recently, the Green Deal, the revamped Industrial Strategy or the new Maritime and Fisheries Fund reflect the EU’s awareness of the great possibilities offered by the seas and oceans. These opportunities are key drivers for the sustainable economic growth of the European Union’s territories.

While the European Parliament continues to take action on the several different maritime policies, the Seas, Rivers, Islands and Coastal Areas Intergroup works to ensure that Europe of the Seas remains a major, cross-cutting and well-identified issue.

From this transversal perspective, the SEArica Intergroup stimulates debate and promotes concrete actions in support of a comprehensive approach to maritime-related policies, that takes into account the links between environmental sustainability, maritime industrial policy and transport, research, ocean literacy, exploitation of marine living resources.

The Intergroup includes a sea basin dimension that considers regional and territorial specificities. It also has a strong Island component and will continue to work to ensure that the European Union duly considers the specific issues faced by the islands.

The CPMR BBSC has contributed to the renewal of the Intergroup with MEP Carmen Avram, Vice-Chair responsible for the Danube and the Black Sea.

The CPMR BBSC, so far, has co-organised under SEArica two online conferences focused on the Black Sea.
SEARICA CONFERENCE ON THE BLACK SEA: HOW CAN REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOSTER SUSTAINABLE BLUE GROWTH IN THE BLACK SEA BASIN?

The Seas, Rivers, Islands and Coastal Areas (SEArica) Intergroup together with the Balkan and Black Sea Commission of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (BBSC CPMR) and the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) organised the 1st SEArica conference focused on the Black Sea on 3 December 2020.

This SEARICA event aimed to present the political and scientific framework for the Black Sea and discussed with key stakeholders how the EU can answer the needs of the main sectors contributing to the blue economy in the Black Sea Region.

The conference’s objective was to provide a dialogue platform amongst EU and national policy-makers, and key regional stakeholders to encourage a debate that would allow for better understanding of the purpose of the main EU strategies focusing on the blue economy in the region. It would also motivate regional stakeholders to become actively involved in the successful implementation of these frameworks’ objectives, and more importantly, bring forward their perspective concerning the Black Sea Region.

The event complemented and supported the preparation of the Regional Stakeholders’ Conference of the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea that took place on 10 December 2020.

SEARICA – FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE IN THE DANUBE AND THE BLACK SEA: VIEWS FOR BUILDING FORWARD BETTER

The Seas, Rivers, Islands and Coastal Areas (SEArica) Intergroup together with the CPMR Balkan and Black Sea Commission (CPMR BBSC) and the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) organised a webinar on “Fisheries and Aquaculture in the Danube and the Black Sea: views for building forward better”, that took place on Thursday, 22 April 2021.

The conference’s aim was to provide a dialogue platform amongst EU, national policy-makers, and key regional stakeholders to encourage a debate for the better understanding of the challenges, as faced by stakeholders on the ground, and the different opportunities that derive from the various EU policies, strategies and initiatives in this diverse but with high potential region.
The European Maritime Day (EMD) Conference is the annual two-day event during which Europe’s maritime community meet to network, discuss and forge joint actions on maritime affairs and the sustainable blue economy.

The EMD Conference is the place where ‘Ocean Leaders Meet’. It provides an interactive experience to catch up on the current state of play on a broad range of issues concerning the blue economy and the marine environment and discuss ways of moving forward. It features a large number of excellent speakers, multiple break-out sessions and project pitch sessions organised by stakeholders and European Commission services as well as hundreds of B2B meetings. The EMD targets professionals from businesses, governments, public institutions, NGOs and academia.

European Maritime Day 2021 took place virtually on 20-21 May in Den Helder, in The Netherlands. It was co-organised with the City of Den Helder, the Province of Noord-Holland (CPMR Member Region) and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management.

The CPMR President, Mr Cees Loggen, Vice-Governor of Noord-Holland, participated in the opening session, on 20 May, followed by Ms Carmen-Gabriela Avram, MEP and SEArica (Seas, Rivers, Islands and Coastal areas) Intergroup Vice-Chair responsible for the Danube and the Black Sea.

During this two-day event, the CPMR organised a workshop on ‘Sustainable Coastal Tourism: Key Actions Towards a Smart and Resilient Recovery’. The workshop involved representative stakeholders from different sea basins, coastal territories and islands in the EU.

The discussion focused on key actions that could be promoted for a smart and resilient recovery of the tourism sector with a spotlight on sustainable coastal and culture tourism, and attention was devoted to territorial needs and potential solutions that could be implemented at different levels exploiting the instruments and tools provided by the EU in the 2021-2027 programming period.

The BBSC was represented by Mr Mamuka Berdzenishvili, Executive Director, Tourism Institute of Georgia (based in Batumi, Ajara Region).
PARTICIPATION IN MARITIME-FOCUSED EVENTS

HOW HAS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AFFECTED THE BLUE ECONOMY IN THE BLACK SEA REGION? POTENTIAL RESPONSE ACTIONS

This online workshop, co-organised by BSEC, the ICBSS, and the European Commission’s DG MARE, aimed at exchanging views on the initial impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on key sectors of the Blue Economy in the Black Sea Region, i.e. coastal and maritime tourism, maritime transport, fisheries and aquaculture, notably identified to have been mostly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In this workshop, moderated by Mr Stavros Kalognomos, Executive Secretary, Balkan and Black Sea Commission (BSEC), Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), and opened by Mr Alexandru Ene, Director for the Western Balkans and Regional Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, on behalf of the Romanian BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office, participated distinguished panellists Mr Christos Economou, Head of Unit Sea Basin Strategies, Maritime Regional Cooperation and Maritime Security, DG MARE, Mr Peter Janech, Senior Officer, Department for Europe UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) (see the presentation), Ms Nadezhda Buhova, Director of European Coordination and International Relations Directorate and Coordinator of the Steering Group on the Common Maritime Agenda, Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications of the Republic of Bulgaria, and Mr Konstantin Petrov, General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) Subregional Coordinator for the Black Sea.

The panellists looked at identifying the potential response actions through the regional framework provided by the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea, a unique framework of regional cooperation for the Black Sea Region.

In total, 95 participants from around the world joined the webinar who highlighted important issues for future discussions and further deliberations, such as the aspect of tourism diversification to mitigate the COVID-19 impact; the potential involvement of landlocked countries in blue economy and the role of public-private partnerships.

This online workshop was the second of a series of webinars planned by the ICBSS to launch a new era of online meetings on key issues targeting the wider Black Sea Region.
BLACK SEA PROJECTS ON COASTAL AND MARITIME TOURISM, MARITIME TRANSPORTS, FISHERY AND AQUACULTURE, DIGITALISATION - GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Following the first online workshop that opened the discussion about the first impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak on key sectors of the blue economy in the Black Sea Region, held in June 2020, this workshop – with the contribution of the European Union’s External Action Service, the CPMR BBSC, and the Black Sea Basin Cross-Border Cooperation Programme – offered an opportunity for an initial brainstorming on gaps and opportunities emerging from the results, best practices and lessons learned of projects with a regional dimension developed in the Black Sea in the sectors of coastal and maritime tourism, maritime transport, fisheries and aquaculture, and digitalisation.

EU4OCEAN - NETWORK OF EUROPEAN BLUE SCHOOLS BSUN BLACK SEA UNIVERSITIES NETWORK FEATURING BLUE SCHOOLS ERASMUS+ PROJECT PARTNERS SPECIALISED TRAINING SESSION ON BLUE ECONOMY

Mr Valentin Moldoveanu, BBSC Acting President, took part in the opening session of this webinar of the Network of European Blue Schools, further to a kind invitation from Professor Eden Mamut, Secretary General of the Black Sea Universities Network (BSUN).

Mr Moldoveanu, together with the BBSC Executive Secretary, had the opportunity to learn more about the Network of European Blue Schools and exchange on their interesting ideas and the CPMR and its BBSC actions and activities.

The objective was to identify useful elements for future discussions on potential flagship projects that take into due consideration the existing and build on that, as well as the new scenarios and challenges imposed by the pandemic.

To this extent, the workshop was organised around 4 thematic sessions during which projects’ representatives were called on to briefly present the projects in order to facilitate the following discussion that also involves the audience and to finally identify some joint conclusions. The thematic sessions included also some projects from other sea basins in order to stimulate the exchange of experience on the same topic.
BSAMI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE BLACK SEA COOPERATION

The Black Sea Association of Maritime Institutions (BSAMI) organised on 10 February 2021, under the leadership of Professor Dr Oral Erdoğan, Rector of Piri Reis University (PRU) and BSAMI chairman since 2018, its Annual General Assembly meeting followed by an International Scientific Conference on “Emerging Trends, Threats and Opportunities in the Black Sea Region”.

The General Assembly meeting was held virtually, with the participation of BSAMI Rectors and Deans from Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine, who discussed topics such as the progress in the fight against COVID-19 and exchange of best practices, and the work plan for the next year in order to improve the scope of maritime cooperation of BSAMI members and enhance efficiency and effectiveness in this area.

Piri Reis University also shared recent developments in its on-going projects, MINE-EMI (Maritime Innovative Network of Education for Emerging Maritime Issues) led by Piri Reis University and iSOL-MET (Innovative Soft Skills to Maritime Education and Training) led by the University of the Aegean (Greece) with the participation of the CPMR BBSC in both. Blue4Seas (Marine Pollution and Environment Protection) led by Mircea cel Batran Naval Academy (Romania), and MERSol (Marine Engine Room Simulator Online) led by Satakunta University of Applied Sciences (Finland). All the Piri Reis University on-going projects will include development of distance learning tools, methodologies and materials in the context of digital transformation.

The CPMR and its BBSC, having a Memorandum of Understanding with BSAMI, participated in the International Scientific Conference on “Emerging Trends, Threats and Opportunities in the Black Sea Region”, with renowned speakers Ms Magdalena Andreea Strachinescu Olteanu, Head of Unit A1 “Maritime Innovation, Marine Knowledge and Investment”, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) European Commission, and Ms Carmen Avram, SEArica Intergroup’s Vice-Chair for the Danube and the Black Sea, and representatives from our partner organisations BSEC and ICBSS.

The International Scientific Conference was attended by Dr Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry, President of World Maritime University, and some 90 participants from the wider Black Sea Region as well as Australia, Canada, and India.

![MINE-EMI kick-off meeting 2020 at Piri Reis University in Istanbul, Turkey](image-url)
TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY

THIS SECTION INCLUDES THE WEBINARS ON TRANSPORT IN THE BALKAN AND BLACK SEA REGION, BSEC MEETING AND THE EUROPEAN YEAR OF RAIL
WEBINAR ON TRANSPORT IN THE BALKAN AND BLACK SEA REGION

The webinar on Transport in the Balkan and Black Sea Region held on Thursday 19 November 2020, was co-organised by the CPMR Balkan and Black Sea Commission (CPMR BBSC), the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) and the Hellenic Institute of Transport of the Centre for Research and Technology Hellas (HIT CERTH).

The webinar focused on the policies framework in the area, accessibility as a component of regional development and the skills for sustainable regional development.

Mr Fokion Zaimis, Deputy Governor of Entrepreneurship, Research and Innovation, Region of Western Greece (Greece), shared Western Greece’s experience in “General Aviation and Interconnection of small airports” at the session dedicated to accessibility as a component for regional development.

Mr Malkhaz Toria, then Acting State Representative in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Region (Georgia), presented his administration’s priorities and perspective regarding skills for sustainable regional development.

Mr Ionut Mocanu, General Manager, Tehnopol Galati Association (Romania) shared the experience of Galati as a transport hub connecting the Danube and the Black Sea.
The CPMR, represented by the BBSC Executive Secretary, participated in the Meeting of the Ministers of Transport of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) that was held online on 24 November 2020, under the Romanian BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office.

The meeting took place in the context of the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which clearly demonstrated the key role of regional cooperation in coping with such unprecedented challenges, affecting all BSEC Member States (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Republic of Moldova, Republic of North Macedonia, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine).

The meeting was held under the motto “Connectivity and digitalisation for a better future of transport”, with the participation of the European Commissioner for Transport, Ms Adina Valean.

The BBSC Executive Secretary shared with participants the key CPMR messages on transport – also further to the joint BBSC-ICBSS-HIT CERTH webinar, highlighted the importance of connecting EU and non-EU regions, and underlined the CPMR Member Regions’ willingness to share their ideas, experience and innovative solutions with their counterparts from the BSEC area, within the CPMR and its Balkan and Black Sea Commission.
WEBINAR ON TRANSPORT IN THE BALKAN AND BLACK SEA REGION: ADVANCEMENTS IN THE PORT SECTOR

The webinar on “Transport in the Balkan and Black Sea Region: Advancements in the port sector”, was co-organised by the CPMR Balkan and Black Sea Commission (CPMR BBSC), the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) and the Hellenic Institute of Transport of the Centre for Research and Technology Hellas (HIT CERTH), on Tuesday 23 March 2021. The webinar focused on Business developments and Environmental sustainability planning.

Mr Valentin Moldoveanu, BBSC Acting President, shared with participants the environmental sustainability planning of the port of Tulcea.

REGION OF WESTERN GREECE - EUROPEAN YEAR OF RAIL

The CPMR BBSC supported the visibility of the online workshop on “The Role of Railway in Growth”, organised on 26 May 2021, at the invitation of Mr Fokion Zaimis, Deputy Governor of Entrepreneurship, Research and Innovation of the Region of Western Greece and Europe Direct Region of Western Greece, in the framework of 2021: European Year of Rail.
ADRIATIC-IONIAN

This section includes the EUSAIR S3 network, the 5th annual EUSAIR forum and the CPMR Adriatic-Ionian task force and "Friends of EUSAIR" interest group.
ADRIATIC-IONIAN REGION (EUSAIR) S3 NETWORK: A PUSH FOR STRENGTHENED INTERNATIONALISATION: FIRST EUSAIR SMART SPECIALISATION STRATEGIES GOVERNANCE REPRESENTATIVES MEETING

This video conference on Smart Specialisation Strategies relating especially to the Adriatic-Ionian region was organised on 23-24 September 2020, in the framework of the Slovenian EUSAIR Presidency, by the EUSAIR Facility Point Lead Partner and Slovenian Smart Specialisation Strategy department.

The conference gave the opportunity to various stakeholders from regions involved in S3 design and implementation in relation to the future macro-regional partnerships to boost cross-cutting collaboration and mutual learning.

The CPMR, coordinator of the Adriatic Ionian Network of Universities, Regions, Chambers of Commerce and Cities (AI-NURECC) Initiative, participated in this event and presented the Cultural and Creative Regional Ecosystems (CCRE-S3), a thematic area elaborated by three active CPMR Member Regions (Aragon, Tuscany, Western Greece) and supported by the CPMR.

5TH ANNUAL EUSAIR FORUM

The 5th Forum of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) was organised online on 28 and 29 January 2021, under the slogan "Strengthening the resilience of the Adriatic and Ionian Region through cooperation".

The plenary and thematic sessions focused on the digital and green transition, the regional response to the COVID-19 crisis, macro-regional cooperation in relation to the EU post-2020 strategic and legal framework, the new methodology for enlargement and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, as well as the recovery of the cultural and creative industries in the region.

The CPMR Secretary General, Ms Eleni Marianou, participated as a speaker in the Plenary session on "Embedding EUSAIR priorities in the post-2020 funding instruments and support for enlargement", underlining that programmes should follow the EUSAIR needs, bridge the region and fulfil this role so that neighbours in both the Adriatic-Ionian Region and the Western Balkans can work together.

The BBSC Executive Secretary, Mr Stavros Kalognomos, presented the CCRE-S3 during the parallel session dedicated to "Post-COVID recovery of the Cultural and Creative Industries in the Adriatic-Ionian Region".
CPMR ADRIATIC-IONIAN TASK FORCE AND “FRIENDS OF EUSAIR” INTEREST GROUP OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The CPMR has recently renewed its Adriatic-Ionian Task Force, composed of representatives and experts from CPMR Member Regions in the Adriatic-Ionian area, and co-chaired by the Regions of Marche and the Ionian Islands, performing a powerful tandem, will play a coordinating role among the CPMR Member Regions from the area.

The renewed Adriatic-Ionian Task Force of the CPMR will be working on the CPMR areas of activity that are important for the Adriatic-Ionian region, with the aim to offer a dedicated platform to boost exchanges and reflection within the CPMR Members in the area.

General objective:

The general objective of the Task Force is to contribute to the correct development and implementation on the ground of EUSAIR, building on existing, emerging, and linkable strategies or cooperation frameworks and by ensuring an adequate coordination and the involvement of regions at all levels.

To this extent, the CPMR Adriatic-Ionian Task Force will work closely, when relevant, with the CPMR Macro-regions Task Force and all concerned CPMR Geographical Commissions (Balkan and Black Sea, Intermediterranean, Islands).

The Task Force should ideally organise one event per year, in cooperation with the recently renewed “Friends of EUSAIR” Interest Group of the European Parliament, under the leadership of MEP Maria Spyraki, with a view to promote specific messages before relevant decision-makers and stakeholders.
BLACK SEA SYNERGY

THIS SECTION INCLUDES THE REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS CONFERENCE AND POLICY PAPER "BLACK SEA SYNERGY: THE WAY FORWARD" AND THE EXTERNAL EVENT ON SUSTAINABILITY IN THE BLACK SEA REGIONAL COOPERATION
The Regional Stakeholders Conference "Black Sea Synergy: the way forward", organised by the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) and co-funded by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) was held on 7 November 2019, in Athens.

The CPMR had the chance to contribute to these exchanges alongside experts from the ICBSS, Southern Federal University (SFedU, Russia), Center of Analysis of International Relations (AIR Center, Azerbaijan), and the Hellenic Institute of Transport of the Centre for Research & Technology Hellas (HIT/CERTH, Greece).

The event gathered 90 participants, from the EU Member States, BSEC countries, regional and international organisations, representing the business community, academia, research centres, civil society organisations and policy-makers.

The Conference provided the opportunity to all the above-mentioned stakeholders to discuss the future of the Black Sea Synergy in the short and medium-term.

Four major areas were addressed by four Working Groups during the meeting: tourism and culture, education, transport, and energy, to identify not only the strengths and opportunities in each field and draw up concrete and tailored ideas, but also potential projects meeting the challenges.

**Culture & Tourism:** The participants underlined the necessity of further cooperation between all the actors involved. They highlighted the need for a common regional action plan. To achieve this goal, a benchmarking of best practices and also failures among areas such as mobility, creative and cultural industries, inclusion, digital, emerging markets and new opportunities was presented as one of the solutions.

**Transport:** Road transport was discussed with a special focus on the development of infrastructures that cannot ignore climate issues. Training programmes, intermodal transport and the further exploitation of inland waterways were also considered as essential key points by the participants.

**Education:** Sustainability and digital transformation have been clearly identified as the two main lines of reflection. Once again, the lack of information exchange and the limited availability of data are crucial issues and have to be overcome.

**Energy:** The Black Sea Region has huge potential in terms of resources that could be maximised through development of energy infrastructure and better connectivity. The use of renewable energies and LNG has been raised amongst a range of solutions for energy diversification.
EXTERNAL EVENT ON SUSTAINABILITY IN THE BLACK SEA REGIONAL COOPERATION: ADVANCING THE BLACK SEA SYNERGY AND THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL

On 16 November 2020, the European External Action Service with the support of the European Commission hosted an online event on “Sustainability in the Black Sea regional cooperation: Advancing the Black Sea Synergy and the European Green Deal”.

The event focused on projects supported by the EU in the Black Sea Region and on implementing the links between regional cooperation and the European Green Deal.

Mr Tonino Picula, Chair of the SEArica Intergroup, participated in the plenary opening session – along with other high-level representatives from EEAS, BSEC, the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, and the European Commission’s DGs – where he presented SEArica’s work and initiatives and proposed ideas that could be implemented in the Danube and Black Sea Region.

Nearly 300 participants took part, including representatives of Black Sea countries, EU Member States, EU institutions, representatives from Black Sea organisations and institutions, project developers, implementers, and beneficiaries: civil society, researchers, think tanks; media as well as members of international financial institutions.
CULTURAL AND CREATIVE REGIONAL ECOSYSTEMS (CCRE-S3)

THIS SECTION PRESENTS THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE REGIONAL ECOSYSTEMS (CCRE-S3) PARTNERSHIP
The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) organised on 14 October 2020, in the framework of the 18th European Week of Regions and Cities, an online workshop to present the newly established Cultural and Creative Regional Ecosystems (CCRE-S3) partnership, under the Regional Smart Specialisation Strategies (RIS3) Smart Specialisation Platform for Industrial Modernisation (S3P-Industry) of the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre.

CCRE-S3 aims to stimulate new insight and opportunities related to cultural and creative experiences for local communities and residents, making peripheral territories more attractive for economic activity. The CPMR Member Regions actively involved in devising and leading the Cultural and Creative Regional Ecosystems (CCRE-S3) thematic area: Aragon (ES), Tuscany (IT) and Western Greece (EL).

The Region of Western Greece is the leader responsible for the coordination of the Adriatic-Ionian, Balkan and Black Sea participating regions and countries.

The CCRE-S3 partnership is supported by the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR).

As the Coordinator of the Adriatic Ionian Network of Universities, Regions, Chambers of Commerce and Cities (AI-NURECC Initiative), the CPMR will ensure that particular focus will be given to the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) and that the thematic area will be accessible to stakeholders from all nine countries participating in the EUSAIR, keeping at the same time the partnership open to participating regions from all over Europe.

The workshop held on 14 October 2020 was an important step in raising awareness of the opportunities that the Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) sector may offer to a wide range of stakeholders to promote cooperation and address contemporary challenges such as the post-crisis recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in the short, mid, and long-term future.

The regional-focused part of the workshop illustrated the CCRE-S3 priorities not only from a regional perspective covering both the public and private sectors, but also from a macro-regional perspective since the CCRE-S3 is the first thematic area under the Industrial Modernisation Platform with a specific focus on a macro-region, and in particular the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR).
OTHER CONFERENCES

THIS SECTION INCLUDES THE ONLINE EXHIBITORS PITCH "SUGGESTIONS FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION", THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON "SCIENCE EVIDENCE-BASED BESICION-MAKING APPROACHES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SDGS IN THE BLACK SEA AREA", ENTREPRENEURSHIP TOWARDS INDUSTRY 4.0 AND THE 11TH INTERNATIONAL BLACK SEA SYMPOSIUM
**Online Exhibitors’ Pitch “Suggestions for Regional Cooperation”**

In the framework of the 18th European Week of Regions and Cities, the Region of Western Greece (Lead Partner) and the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (Greece) organised an online Exhibitors’ pitch “Suggestions for regional cooperation”.

**International Conference on: “Science Evidence-Based Decision-Making Approaches for the Implementation of SDGs in the Black Sea Region”**

Mr Fokion Zaimis, Deputy Governor of Entrepreneurship, Research and Innovation, Region of Western Greece, participated as a keynote speaker, representing the CPMR BBSC at this International Conference, held on 24 March 2021, that was co-organised by the Black Sea Universities Network (BSUN).

The BBSC Executive Secretary participated in this high-level event, where representatives of regional and local authorities, SMEs and experts discussed the emerging challenges of regional cooperation during these turbulent times of the pandemic and explored future cooperation opportunities.

The International Conference – in which participated members of Parliaments, Government officials, academics, experts in the field, Observers and Sectoral Dialogue Partners of BSEC Member States, BSEC related bodies and other international organisations – aimed to offer a framework for free debates facilitating the exchange of ideas, best practices and knowledge, in order to identify new directions to be followed for conceiving the policies addressing the implementation of SDGs in the Black Sea area by supporting the decision-making process with objective evidence and/or scientific frameworks.

**Entrepreneurship Towards Industry 4.0**

In the framework of the European Industry Week 2021, the Region of Western Greece, CPMR BBSC Member and Cultural & Creative Regional Ecosystems (CCRE-S3) Leading Region, co-organised with the Europe Direct Patra the online workshop “Entrepreneurship towards Industry 4.0”, on Wednesday 31 March 2021.

The online workshop consisted of sessions on the extroversion of Greek industry and the international trends for industry 4.0.

This year, the EU Industry Week has focused on accelerating green and digital transition, as well as the changing global competitive landscape in the post-COVID era.

The Region of Western Greece kindly hosted as speakers at this event, Mr Ionut Mocanu, General Manager, Tehnopol Galati Association (Romania) and Ms Ketevan Buliskeria, Manager at Batumi Tech Park (Ajara Region), from Georgia’s Innovation and Technology Agency.
The BBSC Executive Secretary, Mr Stavros Kalognomos, shared the CPMR BBSC’s perspective regarding the challenges and priorities of the post-pandemic economic recovery at the 11th International Black Sea Symposium on “A collective recovery for the Black Sea Region in the post-COVID era”, organised on 20 April 2021, by the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS).
COOPERATION PROJECTS

THIS SECTION INCLUDES
AI-NURECC PLUS
MINE-EMI
iSOL-MET
CulTourE4Youth
BRIDGE-BS
AND SOLAQUA
AI-NURECC PLUS

The Adriatic Ionian Network of Universities, Regions, Chambers of Commerce and Cities Initiative PLUS (AI-NURECC PLUS) is a preparatory action financed by DG REGIO that will capitalise on the results of the AI-NURECC Initiative, which ended in December 2019.

This project is coordinated by the CPMR with the support of four partners from the area: the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion (AIE), the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities (FAIC), the Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce (FORUM AIC), and the Association of Universities of the Adriatic Ionian area (UniAdrion).

The AI-NURECC PLUS partners have joined their efforts to support the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Sea Region (EUSAIR) implementation, ensuring deep and broad territorial coverage while enhancing Regional and Local Authorities’ appropriation of the EUSAIR main objectives and opportunities in the EUSAIR cross-pillar topics: “Research and Innovation”, “SMEs Development”, and “Skills Development”. AI-NURECC PLUS will therefore support entrepreneurship, transnational clusters, and digital innovation hubs activities for the EUSAIR.

Special attention will be paid to Youth, also through initiatives addressed to sport, integration and social inclusion, tools that are expected to further encourage community sustainable development, cohesion and solidarity in the area. AI-NURECC PLUS also aims at encouraging multi-actor networking and collaboration among representatives of the private and public sectors and civil society to foster coordination among EU, national, regional, and local policies to develop the circular economy.

In this context, AI-NURECC PLUS will operate in the following fields: Sustainable Tourism, Cultural and Creative Industries, and Circular Economy.

AI-NURECC PLUS activities will also contribute to the implementation of the Cultural and Creative Regional Ecosystems (CCRE-S3) thematic area’s objectives in the EUSAIR area. CCRE-S3 is an AI-NURECC deliverable and the first thematic area with a specific focus on a Macro-Regional Strategy.
MINE-EMI

Coordinated by the Piri Reis University (Turkey), the Maritime Innovative Network of Education for Emerging Maritime Issues (MINE-EMI) Project focuses on the elaboration of a Joint Master Programme (JMPs) that facilitates developing skills and competences to raise awareness on emerging maritime issues in the wider Black Sea Region in order to promote sustainable management of the maritime sector in the region.

It involves representatives from the business sector and local administrations (i.e., Constanta Maritime University, Romania; Nikola Vaptsarov Naval Academy, Bulgaria; the University of the Aegean, Greece; the Marine Cluster of Bulgaria; and the Municipality of Piraeus, Greece) in order to fill the gap between requirements in the maritime sector (management, transport operations, logistics) and the current lacking offer of updated courses in that matter.

ISOL-MET

Coordinated by the University of the Aegean (Region of North Aegean, Greece), the Innovative SOft SkILs to Maritime Education and Training (iSOL-MET) project focuses on the creation of a comprehensive maritime skills course programme for multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural groups of students – through case study methodology – aiming to bridge the gap between the shipping world requirement and the needs of maritime universities’ students and maritime professionals.

The consortium, consisting of the University of the Aegean (Greece), Nikola Yonkov Vaptsarov Naval Academy (Bulgaria), TC Piri Reis University (Turkey), Constanta Maritime University (Romania), Maritime University of Szczecin (Poland), PPP Learn (Greece), and the CPMR – through its Balkan and Black Sea Commission (BBSC) – will design a case study Handbook collection, evaluation tools for soft skills based on the Assessment Centre concept, provide the link between academia and industry, and therefore contribute to making maritime professions more appealing and competitive.

This project is related to the MINE-EMI Project and the CPMR’s work on maritime education and training.
CultouRE4Youth

Supporting Youth Entrepreneurship in Cultural Tourism for coastal communities in the Black Sea Region (CultouRE4Youth) project aims to develop a regional paradigm as capacity building initiator for empowered youth entrepreneurship. Building on the notion that cultural tourism with a maritime dimension is an up-and-coming blue growth generator, the project will provide background information and analysis on how youth entrepreneurship is promoted by existing policies and initiatives, and how can it be better supported to address local and regional challenges, such as youth unemployment and brain drain.

It will run until the end of 2021, under the coordination of the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) in cooperation with CPMR Balkan and Black Sea Commission and the METU Institute of Marine Sciences (METU IMS, Turkey).

The activity will engage with young people (18-30 y.o.), government agencies, business operators and training institutions in coastal communities in the geographical area of Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine, by means of analysis and consultation activities. The project will use the Mersin Region (Turkey) as a case study to pursue the above-mentioned objectives and will consolidate the results in a dedicated workshop organised by the CPMR BBSC in Batumi (Ajara Region, Georgia).

This project is related to the CPMR’s work on maritime & coastal tourism.
BRIDGE-BS

Advancing Black Sea Research and Innovation to co-Develop Blue Growth within Resilient Ecosystems (BRIDGE-BS) Project is a 54-month project funded under Horizon2020 Programme and led by the Middle East Technical University Institute of Marine Sciences (METU IMS) (Turkey).

BRIDGE-BS will be implemented by addressing the respective goals of the Black Sea Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) and the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA).

BRIDGE-BS proposes a multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral programme building on regional and international initiatives as a critical contribution to the science-based policy needed to preserve the Black Sea ecosystems for the benefit of citizens dependent upon their sustainability.

The project will develop predictive tools and capabilities necessary to understand and predict the impacts of climate-driven and anthropogenic multi-stressors on the services stemming from Black Sea ecosystems.

These services and their responses to stressors will be mapped, monitored, and modelled in order to identify a safe operating space within which a sustainable blue economy can flourish. To this end, BRIDGE-BS is structured around "three" interconnected nodes: Service Dynamics, Blue Growth Incubators and Empowered Citizens.

Among its activities, BRIDGE-BS will train and strengthen collaborations between scientists and stakeholders, as well as policy-makers, industry representatives and societal interest groups. It will also educate, train and stimulate interactions between the public, future generations of marine scientists and entrepreneurs as well as motivate and engage policy-makers, aiming to create a connected Black Sea community, strengthened by a new generation of researchers and innovators to address emerging Black Sea challenges.

This project is related to the CPMR maritime policy work.
SOLAQUA

The overall objective of SolaQua is to increase the share of renewable energy consumption in Europe by facilitating the market uptake of solar irrigation in the agricultural sector.

This project is in line with the European climate ambition to significantly reduce CO2 emissions by 2030. Indeed, the current energy model for irrigation, based on fossil fuels, has a high environmental cost; it produces about 15% of the EU’s total CO2 emissions from agriculture.

Although the potential of solar irrigation to change the energy model of European agriculture is great, the market uptake of solar irrigation is hampered by a number of non-technical barriers that this project will attempt to address.

The SolaQua project is funded under the European Horizon 2020 research programme and will run from October 2020 to October 2023. The SolaQua consortium is composed of 11 solar irrigation stakeholders, among them Calarasi County Council (Romania), from 7 Euro-Mediterranean countries, highly specialised and capable of addressing the technical, economic and regulatory challenges for the adoption of the solar irrigation market: universities, sectoral organisations of irrigators at European level, SMEs in the agricultural engineering sector, an insurance company and public authorities.

Thanks to its experience in communication, capitalisation and mainstreaming activities, the Intermediterranean Commission (IMC) alongside the Balkan and Black Sea Commission (BBSC) of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) have the capacity to adapt and direct the technical contents of the project to the targeted stakeholders (administrations or public institutions), and to ensure the integration of the project results into public policies and strategies.

These skills are essential for the SolaQua project in order to remove legal and political barriers to the adoption of solar irrigation (SI) by the market.

Over the past months, the CPMR IMC, as leader of the policy working group, has been working on the production of a report outlining best practice in SI-related policies and regulations. The need for this report arose from the observation that the regulatory framework affecting SI projects is complex and differs widely between EU countries and regions. Market uptake of SI can be facilitated or hindered by the local regulatory framework. Based on an analysis of different experiences in Europe and beyond, this report will serve as a reference for informed policy-making and as a tool for improving existing regulations in all SI-friendly regions. The CPMR has also been participating in the production of a European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) financial instrument suitable to support SI investment.

Alongside these activities, the CPMR IMC has undertaken actions to disseminate the results of SolaQua to its extensive network of public authorities and has contributed to various communication activities such as the production of short videos, articles on its website and tweets related to SolaQua.

The CPMR BBSC will work closely with Calarasi County Council, its Member Region, to bring the SolaQua project’s deliverables and best practice closer to the other BBSC Member Regions and stakeholders.
THE CONFERENCE OF PERIPHERAL MARITIME REGIONS (CPMR) REPRESENTS MORE THAN 150 REGIONAL AUTHORITIES FROM 24 COUNTRIES ACROSS EUROPE AND BEYOND. ORGANISED IN GEOGRAPHICAL COMMISSIONS, THE CPMR WORKS TO ENSURE THAT A BALANCED TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT IS AT THE HEART OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND ITS POLICIES. THE CPMR IS PRESENT IN THE WIDER BLACK SEA REGION THROUGH ITS BALKAN AND BLACK SEA COMMISSION.