As President of Balkan and Black Sea Commission within CPMR, complementary to my duties as Deputy Governor of Achaia of the Region of Western Greece, I will constantly campaign to combine efforts and involvement of local and regional authorities in the establishment and implementation of new and viable programs and initiatives, with a beneficial territorial impact, in the framework of cross-border cooperation and regional partnerships.

In this context I would like to present you proposals and priorities on the BBSC strategy that will allow us:

❖ To support the development and implementation of the following EU strategies and initiatives in the wider Balkan and Black Sea region:
  • EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR)
  • Western Balkans
  • EU Black Sea Synergy initiative
  • Eastern Partnership

❖ To work closely with the 1st Vice-President from the Black Sea, so that the members that fall within the implementation area of initiatives and strategies such as the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea (Black Sea CMA) and the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda for the Black Sea (Black Sea SRIA) promote their priorities, exchange with other CPMR members from across Europe, and capitalise on good practices from other sea basins.

❖ To support and make new steps on the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR), in close cooperation with the respective members.

❖ To work closely with the other members from the Adriatic-Ionian region and the co-chairs of the CPMR Adriatic-Ionian Task Force to ensure the regional authorities’ contribution to the implementation of the EUSAIR objectives and the new EUSAIR Action Plan. To this end, we will have to work on the capitalisation of the AI-NURECC PLUS and other key projects’ results in which our administrations or the CPMR BBSC is involved.

❖ To closely work with other CPMR Geographical Commissions to ensure synergies on topics of common interest (e.g., help the promote the initiative «Towards a macro-regional strategy in the Mediterranean...» and share information and know-how for other potential macroregions in the BBSC area).

❖ To enhance the visibility of the Balkan and Black Sea Commission towards new members, the EU institutions, and relevant fora; and increase partnerships, notably with the other CPMR Geographical Commissions.

❖ Both we, the BBSC team, and the CPMR General Secretariat to monitor new funding opportunities (mainly EU) and participation of the BBSC members in specific cooperation projects (funded by the EU or regional/international donors), so that closer cooperation to be promoted among members accordingly to the political orientations of the BBSC.
To encourage the active participation of BBSC members in the Cultural and Creative Regional Ecosystems (CCRE-S3) partnership, under the Smart Specialisation Platform for Industrial Modernisation of the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre (JRC), and therefore benefit from our region’s great cultural diversity and potential.

Priority areas: Maritime Affairs, Transport, Energy & Climate, Western Balkans, Eastern Neighbourhood, Cultural and Creative Regional Ecosystems, Civil Protection

Proposed actions: policy messages, lobbying activities, dissemination activities by all members, organization and co-organization of high-level political conferences and seminar sessions with BBSC Member Regions and key partners in the area, participation in fora, participation in projects and initiatives, closer cooperation with organizations such as Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS), Black Sea Association of Maritime Institutions (BSAMI) and National Alliance for Local Economic Development (NALED).

Regarding our political positions, we will jointly work with the CPMR General Secretariat to prepare the necessary documents, in the framework of the BBSC General Assemblies, and on actions harnessing the transversal and per political priority work as well as the main objectives of the cooperation projects in which the BBSC is involved as a partner or facilitator.

As for high-level events and lobbying activities, together with the BBSC Vice-Presidents and all Member Regions we will concentrate on the different priorities of our region, both regarding the various policies and programmes that apply in the BBSC region.

Last but not least by the 52nd General Assembly of the CPMR, on 2-4 October, in Malta, we need to work all together to update our **Action Plan for the 2024-2026 period**.

Thank you for your trust and cooperation!

**Fokion Zaimis**

Deputy Governor of Achaia, Region of Western Greece

Vice-President of the CPMR BBSC and IMC