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ACTIVITY REPORT 2015-2016

(Approved during the 2016 BBSC General Assembly meetings in Istanbul on 30-31 May 2016)

During the last General Assembly of the Balkan & Black Sea Commission (BBSC) in Brussels (Belgium), on the 29 May 2015, the [Final Declaration of Brussels](#) was adopted. The General Assembly was preceded by the meetings of the Working Groups on Tourism (Central Macedonia, Greece) and Business Cooperation (Sinop, Turkey), on the 28 May 2015 in the CPMR offices in Brussels, and followed by a Conference co-organised by the CPMR and the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) entitled "[Balkan and Black Sea Area on the move](#)" at the headquarters of the European Committee of the Regions, in Brussels. The results of this Conference were included in a [Position Paper](#) from the CPMR and its Intermediterranean and Balkan & Black Sea Commissions on the joint consultation document: "Towards a new Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)", issued by the European Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

During the International Transport Week, Exhibition Inter-Transport 2015 on 3-5 June in Odessa, a representative of the BBSC Secretariat introduced the CPMR and its BBSC as well as the [Vasco Da Gama Project](#) spin-off proposal for the Black Sea. This presentation was followed by an updated presentation through a teleconference during the International Black Sea Transport Forum on 20-22 October 2015 in Odessa. The Vasco Da Gama for the Black Sea Project proposal aims at promoting greener and safer maritime transport in the Black Sea basin through increased environmental awareness and cooperation among regional Maritime Educational and Training (MET) institutions. It also involves representatives from the business sector in order to fill the gap between the "green" requirements in the maritime transport sector and the current lack of courses offered in that matter. This project proposal includes activities addressing all major shipping pollution factors at sea, aiming to contribute to the preservation of the Black Sea basin's rich ecosystem and landscape as well as its tourism potential.

The project proposal will be submitted to the 1st Call for Proposals of the ENI CBC Black Sea Basin 2014-2020 Programme. The consortium consists of Bulgarian, Georgian, Greek, Romanian, Turkish and Ukrainian partners.

On the 11-12 June 2015, in Heraklion (Region of Crete, Greece) the CPMR and the Region of Crete co-organised an International Stakeholder Conference on "[Sustainable Tourism as a Pillar of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region \(EUSAIR\)](#)". During this Conference, EUSAIR tourism actors discussed the crucial issues for developing tourism in the area and tackling seasonality with responsible and sustainable actions. The CPMR BBSC Secretariat used the conclusions of this Conference for further reflection on the existing policies in the wider Black Sea area and a potential Macroregional Strategy in the Black Sea basin.

On the 12 June 2015, in Heraklion (Region of Crete, Greece), the CPMR Political Bureau approved the application from the Union of County Councils of the Republic of Moldova (UCCRM) to become a member of the CPMR and its BBSC. The UCCRM participates in the CPMR/BBSC through its 23 Member-County Councils.

On the 5 November 2015, in Florence (Tuscany, Italy), within the framework of the 43rd General Assembly of the CPMR, the [BBSC Pre-General Assembly Meeting](#) was held. It was preceded by [a meeting of the BBSC WG on Tourism](#). During the BBSC Pre-General Assembly Meeting, the necessity to strengthen cooperation

in order to create a proper framework for common and sustainable development and extend the membership of the Balkan and Black Sea Commission to Georgia, Russia and Serbia, was stressed among other issues.

On the 26 November 2015, the ACCESS (small Cruise black Aegean SeaS) Project proposal was submitted to the EASME Call for Proposals, "Projects in the context of the Integrated Maritime Policy in the Black Sea and/or Mediterranean Sea regions" (EASME/EMFF/2015/1.2.1.7). The ACCESS Project proposal was an initiative of the Region of Central Macedonia, as the Coordinator of the BBSC Working Group on Tourism, further to the [questionnaire](#) drawn up by the REsearch in SHipping and Ports Laboratory (RESHIP/Department of Shipping, Trade and Transport, University of the Aegean) team for the [kick-off meeting of the BBSC Working Group on Tourism](#), in 2014 in Edirne (Turkey). The Consortium consisted of Bulgarian, Georgian, Greek, Turkish and Ukrainian partners as well as two international partners, i.e. the International Black Sea Club and the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (related body of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), sectoral dialogue partner of the CPMR). The ACCESS proposal has obtained a total score of 68 (threshold: 60) and is ranked in 1st position in the reserve list.

In December 2015, the CPMR Secretariat General began discussions (under way) with the Permanent International Secretariat of the BSEC in order to enhance their collaboration through a Memorandum of Understanding.

At the present time, the CPMR/BBSC Secretariat is actively involved in the preparation of three project proposals to be submitted to the 1st Call for Proposals of the ENI CBC Black Sea Basin 2014-2020 Programme.

Apart from the aforementioned Vasco Da Gama for the Black Sea Project proposal, led by the Nikola Vaptsarov Naval Academy (Varna, Bulgaria), the WEBLA-e and the Black SeaL Project proposals are also under preparation.

The WEBLA-e (Entrepreneurship Development in Wetlands and Estuaries in the Black Sea Area) Project proposal under the initiative of the Region of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace (Greece) addresses the need to promote entrepreneurship and business development in order to produce high value-added tourism products and establish novel tourism development approaches which respect and enhance "protected areas". The project will aim to establish a strong cooperation between the network of stakeholders from different regions with similar environmental, social and economic characteristics in order to develop their tourism without undue disturbance to their ecosystems. Apart from the Lead Partner, the consortium (under development) will consist of Bulgarian, Greek, Romanian, Turkish and Ukrainian partners.

The Black SeaL (Black Sea Local & Regional Authorities Forum) Project proposal, under the initiative of the Association of Cross-Border Cooperation "Lower Danube Euroregion" (Romania), envisages the creation of a Forum which will be launched in partnership with the Black Sea NGO Forum in order to foster all possible synergies between Local & Regional Authorities and NGOs. At the same time, this Forum shall increase the level of dialogue and cooperation among the stakeholders and promote the partnership between public and private sectors (taking into account the existing legislation on the topic of PPP). These partnerships will mainly focus on business and entrepreneurship in the tourism and cultural sectors. The debates during the 2016 BBSC General Assembly meetings, on 30-31 May 2016 in Istanbul, will nourish the content of this project proposal and inspire the composition of the consortium.

Through participation in the aforementioned and future project proposals, the aim of the CPMR/BBSC is twofold: to transfer and capitalise on the expertise acquired at European level and in other sea basins, and to give new impetus to existing policies in the wider Black Sea area and drive forward new ones.

Mr Patrick Anvroin, Director at the CPMR responsible for the BBSC, will participate as a speaker during the Conference on the Blue Economy of the Black Sea (3rd Stakeholder Conference after those in Bucharest (2014) and in Sofia (2015)) on the 14 June in Odessa, Ukraine. The CPMR/BBSC is actively involved in the development of maritime policies and strategies and envisages an active role in the implementation of Blue Economy and Integrated Maritime Policy in the Black Sea.