2019 BBSC General Assembly
12 – 13 April 2019, Tulcea (Romania)

**BBSC Meetings**

The 2018 General Assembly of the Balkan & Black Sea Commission (BBSC) was held on 31 May, in Burgas (Bulgaria), in the venue of the 2018 European Maritime Day. As the topics of interest to the BBSC were covered at the [CPMR-BSEC Workshop on Project Promotion](#), held on 28 March in Istanbul (Turkey), the 2018 BBSC General Assembly and maritime topics would be covered in detail at the European Maritime Day, the 2018 General Assembly meeting was shorter, with a focus on organisational issues.

At the 2018 BBSC Pre-Assembly meeting, held within the framework of the 46th CPMR General Assembly in Funchal (Madeira, Portugal) on 18 October 2018, the Members had the opportunity to discuss the latest developments of the Balkan and Black Sea Commission with a view to the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

**European Commission**

The CPMR is fully associated with the Steering Group on the “Facility for Blue Growth in the Black Sea”, is actively involved in the discussions for a Black Sea Strategic and Innovation Agenda (Black Sea SRIA) set up by the European Commission (DG MARE, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries and DG RTD, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation), and is among the main actors for the actions envisaged.

During the 2018 European Maritime Day, organised by the European Commission’s Directorate General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, the Bulgarian EU Presidency and the Municipality of Burgas, on 31 May and 1 June, the CPMR was actively involved in the following workshops:

- Between Green and Blue: Sustainability in Marine and Coastal Tourism (in which Mr Valentin Moldoveanu, Tulcea County Councillor participated as a speaker representing the BBSC);
- Towards 2030: Foster a sustainable fisheries and aquaculture sector;
- Regional Strategies and Maritime Cooperation: Now and in the Future.

Furthermore, the CPMR is the only Association of Regions mentioned in the Burgas Ministerial Declaration “Towards a Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea”, of 31 May 2018.
The CPMR is coordinating the Adriatic Ionian Network of Universities, Regions, Chambers of Commerce and Cities (AI-NURECC Initiative), an initiative financed by DG REGIO, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, to support the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR) (please see further details below).

The CPMR also remains in contact with DG NEAR, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations regarding the organisation of workshops in the Eastern Partnership / Black Sea Synergy area.

**Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)**

The CPMR and BSEC, sectoral dialogue partners since 2009, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 20 April 2017. Since the signature of this MoU, the CPMR and BSEC PERMIS (Permanent International Secretariat of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation) collaboration has been even closer.

The CPMR was actively involved in the International Conference on Fisheries and Blue Growth, held in Istanbul on 31 October-1 November, where it was represented by the Region of Attica (CPMR Member) and the Policy Officer in charge of the BBSC.

On 28 March 2018, the CPMR BBSC and BSEC PERMIS organised a joint Workshop on Project Promotion at the BSEC Headquarters in Istanbul, addressed to Regional and Local Authorities as well as other stakeholders from the wider Black Sea region, with an aim to present the significant role of Regional Authorities in policy-making, the available funding instruments and sustainability of actions, and a number of successful regional cooperation examples in various parts of Europe and the Black Sea area.

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On 4 April 2019, the CPMR BBSC represented by its Executive Secretary, participated as a speaker in the International High-level Conference on Marine Litter with a focus on the Danube River and the Black Sea (ICML), organised in Sofia (Bulgaria) by the Permanent International Secretariat of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC PERMIS) and the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS), with the expert support of the Ministry of Environment and Water of the Republic of Bulgaria. The overall objective of the ICML was to stimulate and facilitate enhanced inter- and intra-regional cooperation at policy, business and research levels, in order to improve the framework conditions and to mitigate obstacles for sustainable marine litter management in the target region.

**Black Sea meetings**

A representative from the CPMR General Secretariat participated as a speaker in the 10th International Black Sea Symposium (IBSS) on “The Black Sea – Silk Road corridor: Building bridges of cooperation”, held in Athens (Greece) on 6-7 March 2019. Through the 10th IBSS, the ICBSS aimed at offering a platform for dialogue among stakeholders in order to highlight the role of the Black Sea countries and assess the different levels of engagement, from international to national and regional; and identify challenges, opportunities for, and best practices of cooperation along the Black Sea-Silk Road corridor. The CPMR representative presented the Adriatic Ionian Network of Universities, Regions, Chambers of Commerce and Cities (AI-NURECC Initiative) as well as examples of CPMR projects and strategies related to coastal and maritime tourism (i.e. HERIT-DATA, MITOMED+ and the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission’s political agenda entitled “Promoting Sustainable Tourism in the Mediterranean Regions”).

The CPMR BBSC, represented by Mr Valentin Moldoveanu, Tulcea County Councillor and its Executive Secretary, was among the key panellists (Workshops on Coastal and Maritime Tourism and Fisheries and Aquaculture) of the Regional Stakeholder Seminar – Towards a Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea, held on 19 March 2019, in Istanbul. The Seminar was organised with the support of the European Commission and the BSEC PERMIS. It gathered policy experts, scientists, entrepreneurs and regional organisations to debate on the challenges and opportunities for cooperation on marine and maritime affairs in the Black Sea.
It also sought to identify joint actions to support an innovative, resilient and sustainable blue economy in the region.

**Cooperation projects**

The BBSC secretariat continues to encourage cooperation between CPMR members and has been acting as a facilitator for various consortia at pan-European and regional level.

**ENI CBC Black Sea Basin Programme 2014-2020**

The BBSC secretariat helped to set up and facilitate the consortium of the DACIAT (Developing of Actual Competences and Improvement in Aquaculture Trade) Project proposal that was approved for funding by the ENI CBC Black Sea Basin Programme 2014-2020. The DACIAT project is led by the Delta Danube National Institute (DDNI) from Romania, and the CPMR BBSC Members involved in the DACIAT project are Galati and Tulcea County Councils and Odesa Regional State Administration (through the Association of Cross-border Cooperation “Lower Danube Euroregion”) and the Eastern Macedonia-Thrace Region (directly involved).

The CPMR BBSC was represented by its Executive Secretary, who participated as a speaker at the opening seminar, on 21 March 2019, that followed the kick-off meeting of the DACIAT Project and was hosted by Karadeniz Technical University Faculty of Marine Sciences (Trabzon, Turkey), concerning the state of aquaculture and fish processing in Turkey.

The BBSC secretariat helped to set up and facilitate the consortium of the NOSTOUR (Black Sea NOStalgia TOURism) Project proposal which was addressed to the CPMR BBSC members from Romania eligible for the ENI CBC Black Sea Basin Programme 2014-2020 (Galati and Tulcea Counties) so that one of them could participate as the Lead Partner. Finally, the Lead Partner of the consortium is the Association of Cross-border Cooperation Lower Danube Euroregion, and the LP’s relevant actions will take place in Galati (CPMR BBSC Member).

The proposed project aims at the development of networking and cooperation in the tourism sector in order to systematically attract Diasporas, through the development of tourism routes and services, to their country of origin in the Black Sea area. Special care will be given to the promotion of cultural resources of the area, to the ethnic groups’ common values despite the different importance of tourist routes, in the context of co-existence principles in today’s globalised economy.

**Erasmus+ Programme**

The CPMR is a full partner in the Maritime Innovative Network of Education for Emerging Maritime Issues (MINE-EMI) Project proposal, submitted by Pirı Reis University (Turkey) to the Erasmus+ Turkish National Agency under the Call 2019 Round 1 KA2 (Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices / KA203 Strategic Partnerships for higher education).

The MINE-EMI Project is focused 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 Basin in order to promote sustainable management of the maritime sector in the Black Sea basin. It involves representatives from the business sector and local administrations in order to fill the gap between requirements in the maritime sector (management, transport operations, logistic) and the current lacking offer of updated courses in that matter. In the longer term, the objective is to establish a “Black Sea Community of MET (Maritime Education and Training) Institutions” to contribute to boosting sustainable European maritime economy, Blue Growth, and Integrated Maritime Policy implementation by providing modern and adequate education and training.
The CPMR is a full partner in the “YouthGoSocial” Project proposal. Its concept note was submitted by the International Centre for Black Sea Studies under the EU4Youth – Fostering youth employment and societal change through social entrepreneurship (EuropeAid/162818/DH/ACT/Multi) Call.

The overall objective of this proposal is to facilitate the development of social entrepreneurship in selected EaP countries (Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine) through the creation of recommendations set for policy-makers, capacity-building and skills development tools.

The specific objectives are to equip creative young people with adequate skills through non-formal training and practical experiences in innovative approaches to entrepreneurship education, and to increase the employability potential of all youth, including youth at risk, by building a triad alliance between employers, educational institutions and policy-makers to facilitate trained youth entry into the labour market.

The BBSC Secretariat helped to set up and facilitate the consortium of the BluAct network, led by the Municipality of Piraeus (Attica Region, Greece) and including from the BBSC area the Municipalities of Burgas (Bulgaria) and Galati (Romania).

The CPMR BBSC Executive Secretary participated as a speaker in the BluAct Transnational Meeting in Piraeus, on 29-30 August, where it provided an update on regional activities to promote investment in the Maritime Economy. The BluAct meeting brought together political representatives and policy officers from the Port of Piraeus and seven other European port cities involved in the ‘BluAct’ Transfer Network. The aim of this innovative network is to introduce and incorporate the good practices of the Piraeus Blue Growth Initiative (BGI), which the Piraeus Municipality has been implementing since 2014, in the seven other port cities.

The Adriatic Ionian Network of Universities, Regions, Chambers of Commerce and Cities (AI-NURECC Initiative) is an initiative of the key stakeholders of the Adriatic Ionian Regions, which have decided to join their efforts to support implementation of the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Sea Region (EUSAIR), ensuring deep and broad territorial coverage, at regional and local level.

The AI-NURECC initiative is coordinated by the CPMR with the support of four partners from the area: Adriatic Ionian Euroregion (AIE), Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities (FAIC), Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce (Forum AIC), and UniAdrion.

The Initiative, with an 18-month duration, started in March 2018 with the aim of helping to achieve the EUSAIR’s political objectives and to foster the sound implementation of its Action Plan. The final goal will be to promote a structured dialogue and a stronger, more effective cooperation among Regional and Local Authorities, Universities, Chambers of Commerce, youth associations and networks, entrepreneurs and civil society. AI-NURECC actions will integrate and follow the relevant work prepared by the Presidency of the EUSAIR/All (programme of the Presidency).
Four preparatory actions are set up:

1. AI-NURECC Youth Action;
2. AI-NURECC Creative and Cultural Industries Action;
3. AI-NURECC Task Force on Tourism and Cultural Heritage; and
4. AI-NURECC Skills Development & Training Action.

These actions will be accompanied by two specific actions, to be developed in cooperation and synergy with the AI Stakeholder platform, aimed at fixing the conditions to operate across the whole macro-region:

1. AI-NURECC-focused Communication Campaign; and
2. AI-NURECC Observatory on Multi-level Governance.

The AI-NURECC Initiative was presented at the CPMR-BSEC Workshop, on 28 March 2018 in Istanbul, as an idea for closer Black Sea cooperation.

In the BBSC region, the AI-NURECC Initiative has organised the following events:

- An event entitled “Cruise Sector in the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) Area: challenges and future perspectives” that was held on 27 June in Ancient Olympia (Greece). The event was organised by Forum AIC, a partner in the AI-NURECC Initiative, which is coordinated by the CPMR. This AI-NURECC Initiative’s first event, held as part of its Task Force on Tourism and Cultural Heritage, was organised in collaboration with the Ilia Chamber of Commerce, which is a Forum AIC member, and the Region of Western Greece, which has the Presidency of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission. Mr Valentin Moldoveanu, of Tulcea County Council, CPMR BBSC member, shared Tulcea County’s experience on the topic.

- The Forum on EU Policies and EU Territorial Cooperation Opportunities focused on Technology, Innovation and Youth in the Adriatic-Ionian area followed by a Training Workshop focusing on the practicalities of preparing and implementing successful cooperation projects in the EUSAIR and an Info-kiosk on cultural heritage and tourism. This series of events were held in Tirana (Albania), on 20-21 November 2018, kindly hosted by Mr Aldrin Dalipi, Chairman of Tirana Regional Council, CPMR BBSC and IMC Member.

- On 17-18 December, the CPMR organised in Belgrade (Serbia) a seminar on EU Policies & EU Territorial Cooperation opportunities, focused on connectivity, energy transition and networks, followed by a Europroject Design Training Workshop to promote access to EU programmes/funds, focused on the practicalities of preparing and implementing successful cooperation projects in the EUSAIR. Given the importance of the Danube for the BBSC and the significant geographical overlap between EUSDR and EUSAIR, the AI-NURECC events in Serbia also welcomed the experience of the Danube region that contributed significantly to the objective of this exercise.

The BBSC President and Regional Governor of North Aegean, Ms Christiana Kalogirou, spoke on the topic “how public and private stakeholders contribute to the sustainable development of connectivity and energy and promote youth employment” and met with Mr Đorđe Staničić, Secretary General of the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SKGO/SCTM) of Serbia, to discuss the potential for future cooperation opportunities.