



CPMR **BALKAN & BLACK
SEA COMMISSION**

BBSC Business Plan

Presented during the Pre-Assembly of the BBSC
3 November 2016, Ponta Delgada (Azores, Portugal)

BBSC Business Plan

1 Executive Summary

The aim of this Business Plan is to upgrade the activities of the CPMR Balkan and Black Sea Commission whilst ensuring, through a concrete action plan, increased membership, enhanced cooperation among the members and strong participation in the CPMR's core activities. The Business Plan builds upon the priorities and the actions proposed in the BBSC Action Plan presented in May 2016. It describes the current status of the Commission and sets the Strategic Objectives in the form of a Mission Statement and 5 Strategic Priorities.

A SWOT analysis identifies the strong and the weak points of the area and the BBSC, and highlights the opportunities the organisation needs to seize over the next few years.

Chapters 5 and 6 provide further detail about the political priorities in the areas of the Black Sea and the Balkans and define the relevant institutions and the relations that need to be established or further developed with them.

Finally, a work distribution plan is presented in Chapter 7, distributing tasks among the Secretariat and the Members for the political work, organisation of events, internal communication and preparation of projects.

The annexes include further details about the BBSC Member Regions, the CPMR Working Groups and Task Forces available for BBSC Members and a draft calendar of activities and actions that will frequently be updated.

2 Description of BBSC

The CPMR Balkan and Black Sea Commission is one of six CPMR Geographical Commissions. It was established back in 2004 after the two existing Commissions of the Balkans and the Black Sea area decided to join forces.

Currently, the Commission brings together Members from Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Albania, Republic of Moldova, Turkey, and Ukraine.

2.1 The Executive Bureau

The decision-making body of the BBSC is the Political Bureau, made up of a President, three Vice-Presidents and one Member for each country represented by at least one Region.

The President is the supreme representative of the BBSC, representing it in all external and internal relations with the CPMR. S/He has the power to make all necessary decisions aiming at the implementation of its policies and decisions adopted. The President is a Full Member of the CPMR Political Bureau and s/he is elected by the BBSC General Assembly, for a two-year term. The President is assisted by three Vice-Presidents that can be delegated with certain tasks.

2.2 Secretarial support

The Executive Secretariat is based in Rennes. The headquarters of the Commission are in Kavala – the office and staff are administered by the Region of Eastern Macedonia & Thrace.

The Members of the Secretariat are responsible for supporting the Member Regions, coordinating lobbying actions with regard to the EU Institutions and organising statutory meetings of the Commission and events/meetings in Brussels. They are also responsible for project development following relevant Calls for Projects where BBSC Members are eligible.

3 SWOT analysis

A first analysis of the area that the BBSC covers in relation to existing or potential members and the role of the CPMR delivered the following results:

Strengths

- A dynamic, fast growing area;
- Strong interest of all the countries in approaching or accessing the EU;
- The area can take part both in pre-accession and neighbourhood funds but also in those addressed to the Member States;
- Many international organisations are quite active in the area;
- The BBSC is strategically positioned, covering an area of two Macro-Regional Strategies (EUSAIR and EUSDR Strategies) and the Black Sea Basin Strategy.

Weaknesses

- Economic difficulties that prevent Members from traveling and participating in events and actions;
- Different approaches and interests between Balkan and the Black Sea countries;
- Weak administration capacity at national and local level;
- Non-EU member countries are not eligible for most of the EU Calls;
- Lack of leadership in the area to coordinate relations and cooperation among stakeholders and the European Institutions.

Opportunities

- The CPMR is one of the few European Organisations with active Members in the area;
- Low subscription cost for the BBSC compared to other CPMR Commissions;
- DG NEAR and DG MARE are interested in identifying credible partners in the area;
- The CPMR has established cooperation with the European Commission as a highly respected partner;
- BBSC Members can be further involved in the governance of the macro-regions and strategies;
- The CPMR is about to sign an MoU with BSEC further strengthening its political influence and impact in the area.

Threats

- The political and nationalistic tensions that create instability in many countries of the area;
- The economic situation in the Region prevents Regions from investing in their participation in CPMR/BBSC;
- Low level of regional governance – in some countries the level does not exist at all.

4 Strategic Objectives

Based on the conducted SWOT analyses and the political mission of CPMR, the BBSC sets a mission statement corresponding to the needs and the challenges of the broader area:

4.1 Mission Statement

The objective of the Balkan and Black Sea Commission (BBSC) is to encourage dialogue in the Region and increase stakeholders' awareness and cooperation with a view to stepping up relations between EU and non-

EU Regions in the wider Black Sea area, contributing towards stability and growth and fostering the presence of the CPMR in this area, stimulating collaboration, promoting best practice and drawing attention to challenges.

4.2 Strategic Priorities

The Mission Statement is further analysed to include five strategic priorities that present in details the objectives and targets of the BBSC and can serve as the main political pillars of the Commission:

1. Promotion of the interests of the Regions in the wider Black Sea Area: To increase the BBSC's presence and role, thus ensuring a strong regional voice for its Members with regard to European and international institutions, in particular to promote their priorities to the EU institutions.
2. Shaping macro-regional and maritime strategies: To participate in the shaping, at regional and EU level, of macro-regional and maritime strategies relevant to the area: the Black Sea Synergy, the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR), and the Integrated Maritime Policy for the Black Sea.
3. Networking: To enhance networking of local, regional and national stakeholders, promote collaboration among CPMR/BBSC Members and other local actors in the wider Black Sea region, in a wide range of areas and in particular tourism, social, economic and territorial cohesion, marine and maritime issues, transport, accessibility, neighbourhood policy and environment.
4. Projects: To set up and implement concrete projects to boost development in the Region, in major sectors such as migration, entrepreneurship, transport, and upgrading the quality of public services.
5. Capacity building: To train its Members and provide expertise to the area from pioneer Regions at pan-European level; to take full part in the CPMR's work: Executive Bodies (GA, PB), Working Groups and Task Forces.

5 Political Priorities

In order to address the Strategic Objectives and implement its Mission Statement mainly focusing on the three areas of lobbying, project development and capacity building, the BBSC should focus on the political priorities described below, followed by concrete actions and activities for each one of them. The proposed activities and actions are described in the attached Annex IV - provisional timetable of actions.

5.1.1 Dual strategic approach: Mediterranean and the Black Sea

On a political level, a new approach is focusing equally on the two areas of the Black Sea and the East Mediterranean (Adriatic, Ionian, and Aegean). At the same time, the Danube area should also be monitored. The table in Annex I presents the strategies applied and the most important programmes available for the area. Stronger cooperation with other Commissions, especially those active in the same areas, is foreseen.

5.1.2 Target Groups: The Balkans/The Black Sea

Two different target groups of countries are identified, though some countries might participate in both. These groups have different aims and different approaches but at the same time similar needs. This similarity and the geographical proximity leaves plenty of room for cooperation and profitable exchanges. The BBSC will be built on the common needs and objectives of its Members, invest in creating synergies among them and improve their connection with the European Institutions.

5.1.2.1 The Balkans

This target group has a more European approach. With four Member States (Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia), four EU-candidate members (Serbia, FYROM, Albania, Montenegro) one potential candidate (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and strong connections with the rest of the EU countries they are familiar with EU procedures and legislation. The aim of this group is to have better access and influence the decision-making process on an EU level, to participate in more EU Calls and to be actively involved in the governance of macro-regional strategies in the area. The BBSC can support these aims through lobbying EU Institutions, coordinating activities with other Commissions and Task Forces. A more administration-orientated approach,

being more project oriented, and increased lobbying of the EU Institutions and usual CPMR activities are indicated for this sub-target group.

5.1.2.2 The Black Sea

The countries of the Black Sea are interested in cooperation with EU countries but also countries from other areas. Their aim is to strengthen ties with EU countries and benefit mainly in sectors such as tourism, trade, capacity building, innovation, etc. Those countries are excluded from most EU-funded programmes, but the Black Sea Basin and many Calls mainly from DG NEAR and EAAC (Erasmus+) are available. For this area, it is important to involve/invite them to as many activities as possible, not only in their area but also give them access to major events in Brussels, if possible with a budget available for travel costs. Lobbying the EU Institutions to include them as eligible areas in more programmes is also important. More interaction is also needed with their missions/representations in Brussels, as their decisions are more political and most of the authorities at Regional level are appointed.

5.1.2.3 Both target groups

A sense of common identity for both groups can be built upon project implementation and policy work that is relevant to all the area. Tourism, trade, as well as energy, are the top priorities for all these countries. Cooperation with other EU areas and not only among them is also important. Synergies through INTERREG and other Calls can be created. Also, the CPMR could launch initiatives such as an “Adopt a Region” project, which would work like a twinning for Regions, where Regions from other Geographical areas would “adopt” Regions from the BBSC, providing support in capacity building activities, staff training, engagement in projects, etc.

5.1.3 EUSAIR and parallel participation in the BBSC and the Intermediterranean Commission

One of the main priorities of the Balkan area is to actively participate in the governance of the EUSAIR and the funding available in the broader area of the Mediterranean since most of the EU-funded programmes available for this area are linked to this sea basin (MED, MED ENI, BALKAN-MED, ADRION, etc). To this extent, the BBSC Members will be encouraged to participate more actively in the CPMR EUSAIR Task Force, which is a joint venture of the BBSC and Intermediterranean Commissions. It will also be proposed that Members of one Commission will be able to follow the work of the other as active observers (able to participate in all activities but without voting rights).

5.2 Relations with the Institutions

5.2.1 European Commission

The CPMR is already in close cooperation with the European Commission. For the BBSC the most important DGs are DG REGIO (Regional and Urban Policy), DG NEAR (Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations) and DG MARE (Maritime Affairs and Fisheries), where there are already on-going discussions for cooperation and potential projects that could significantly support the work of the BBSC.

5.2.2 European Parliament

The most relevant Committees of the European Parliament are the REGI (Regional Development) AFET (Foreign Affairs) and DEVE (Development). Monitoring of the work of these Committees and establishing contacts with their Members to promote our work but also to ensure closer cooperation on a political level is essential. At the same time, the BBSC could benefit from the limited budget lines available for projects in the area. The BBSC could also organise a couple of events per year in the premises of the European Parliament in cooperation with the most active and cooperative MEPs and invite them to also engage more with letters and bilateral meetings in supporting the area and its goals. A stronger engagement of the BBSC in the SEARICA Intergroup, also by motivating MEPs from the member countries to participate should be encouraged.

5.2.3 Managing Authorities

As financing of the activities (membership fees, travel expenses) is one of the major obstacles faced by most of the countries to participate in the BBSC, cooperation with the Managing Authorities in the area could provide some financial support either in the form of Technical Assistance or within specific projects. In this

respect, the Managing Authorities of Black Sea Basin, Balkan MED, and ADRION CBC are the first to be contacted. Meetings with MAs should be held at both political and technical level.

5.2.4 The Council of Europe

The most appropriate Forum to contact, coordinate and attract members for the BBSC is the Council of Europe, where all the countries participate and have representatives. The Governor of North Aegean is a Member of the General Assembly and the Monitoring Committee and could lead this process with support from the CPMR. More specifically, given the General Assembly meeting in October in Strasbourg, a letter could be sent to all the Council of Europe representatives of the countries of interest, introducing them to the CPMR and the BBSC and proposing meetings on bilateral and multilateral levels back-to-back with the General Assembly. The Secretary General of the Congress of Local Authorities, Mr Kiefer, is willing to support such an initiative.

5.2.5 BSEC

The Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) is a key player in the area, and the last BBSC General Assembly was organised in its headquarters in Istanbul, in May 2016. The CPMR is currently negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding with the BSEC that would allow a broader cooperation with the Organisation. There is also an on-going discussion about establishing an antenna office of the CPMR in the BSEC premises, in the next few months.

5.2.6 Representations in the EU and Brussels offices

Missions, Representations and Offices of Local Authorities in Brussels should also be contacted and involved with the CPMR. An escalation on involvement could start from a bilateral meeting, an invitation to our events and as a next step, meetings to discuss potential project preparation on a common basis. The most interested and motivated people can form an informal network of contacts to support us in identifying the right entities and people back in the Regions, but they could also represent these Regions during our meetings in Brussels.

5.2.7 CORLEAP

CORLEAP meetings are an excellent opportunity to contact their members regarding CPMR membership. Members of CORLEAP that are from CPMR Member Regions could facilitate this process and support some basic common activities.

5.2.8 Banks

A number of institutional banks are active in the area, providing support to governments and enterprises, even SMEs in some cases. A contact with these banks would serve a two-fold purpose: 1. To explore the possibility of cooperation with the CPMR (technical assistance). 2. To map the financial instruments available (loans, guarantees, grants) for the area. Bilateral meetings can be organised on a political and technical level and maybe even an event in Brussels with the participation of representatives from all the banks would be interesting. The CPMR could organise a high-level Conference on the future of the Balkan and Black Sea area regarding investments and EU support. The acting BBSC President, Mrs Kalogirou, has already made initial contact with the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank to arrange a meeting to discuss further cooperation possibilities.

5.3 Invest in our expertise

The CPMR possesses a high level of specialisation in various sectors and is in a position to support its Members, especially in the areas of transport, blue growth and tourism, providing them with intelligence, information and networking. It can also support their participation in the EUSAIR and Danube Strategy. The BBSC should maybe focus additionally on the possibility of combining the new financial instruments with the pre-accession and neighbourhood funds. A newsletter with information, Calls, news, etc to be sent on a monthly basis could better highlight this expertise and at the same time provide valuable information to the Members.

6 Management of BBSC

Due to the nature of the area as it has been already described, and the limited human and financial resources available, it is important to coordinate the work of the Members and the CPMR Secretariat staff to maximise the results and the efficiency of our work.

6.1 Internal communications

It is crucial to establish a high level of internal communication not only from the Secretariat to the Members but also in the opposite direction. The BBSC office in Kavala will be responsible for collecting information from the Members and the Secretariat and publishing an internal newsletter every month with useful information such as announcements about new Calls for Proposals, partner searches, reports from CPMR and the Members of BBSC events and meetings, selection of news relevant to the area, etc. The editorial team will work under the supervision of the CPMR Press and Communication Officer.

6.2 Meetings in Brussels

To implement the present business plan, a series of meetings will need to take place mostly in Brussels with different stakeholders. The CPMR Secretariat in Brussels will coordinate these meetings, and the effort will be to involve the BBSC Members as much as possible in this process, asking for their cooperation and even their participation when this is possible. The BBSC Members should inform the Secretariat about their visits to Brussels to make it possible to organise meetings with them in parallel to their official programme. The acting BBSC President, Mrs Kalogirou, will take responsibility for arranging the meetings in the framework of the Council of Europe. The Regions represented in the Committee of the Regions could make contact with the CORLEAP Members. The Secretariat will be leading the contact with the EU Institutions and the representation offices of potential members. Contacts with the Managing Authorities can also be established with the support of the Regions of the hosting country.

6.3 Organisation of events

Events play a pivotal role in the implementation of the BBSC strategy as they are an opportunity to present our work, lobby the participants and stimulate new partnerships and projects. Coordination is needed for this reason to avoid overlapping and even more to make it possible to combine activities. Annex IV presents a provisional timetable of activities until June 2017. This schedule should be updated with information from all the Members to be presented to the BBSC General Assembly in the Azores.

6.4 Project preparation

The BBSC Secretariat is coordinating project proposals where BBSC members are involved, following the priorities that were set by the General Assembly of the Commission. Over the next months, the BBSC will focus on the new round of INTERREG programmes and also on the DG NEAR, MARE, and CEF (Connecting Europe Facility) Calls. Through the internal newsletter, information will be provided to the Members about future Calls, together with useful tips resulting from meetings and consultations with the Managing Authorities.

7 Key Cooperation Axes

The area covered by the BBSC is very fragmented and under-developed compared to the EU average, with inadequate expertise and various political and ethnic tensions. However, the countries of the area are keen to establish stronger cooperation with the EU and the Member States of the area can serve as pioneers on a regional level to stimulate cooperation among local authorities and other stakeholders. The CPMR can act as coordinator and facilitator, providing expertise and support at a technical and political level regarding the European Institutions.

The BBSC aims to increase membership and the active involvement of Regions and be present in all countries of the area. The BBSC should also play a more active role in all the macro-regional strategies related to the respective area to better represent the interest of its Members.

8 ANNEXES

Annex I – Funding Opportunities in the Area

Programme Name	Website
Greece - Bulgaria	http://www.greece-bulgaria.eu/
Greece - Cyprus	http://www.greece-cyprus.eu/
Greece - Italy	http://www.greece-italy.eu/
Hungary - Croatia	http://www.huhr-cbc.com/
Hungary - Romania	http://2014.huro-cbc.eu/
Italy - Croatia	http://www.italy-croatia.eu
Romania - Bulgaria	http://www.cbcmromaniabulgaria.eu/
Slovenia - Croatia	http://84.39.218.255/si2/
Adrion	http://www.adrioninterreg.eu/
Alpine Space	http://www.alpine-space.eu/home/
Balkan - Mediterranean	http://www.interreg.gr
Central Europe	http://www.central2020.eu/
Danube	http://www.interreg-danube.eu/
Mediterranean	http://interreg-med.eu/en/home/
South West Europe	http://interreg-sudoe.eu/FRA
ESPON	www.espon.eu
Interact	www.interact-eu.net
Interreg Europe	http://www.interregeurope.eu/
URBACT	www.urbact.eu
Bulgaria - FYROM	http://www.ipa-cbc-007.eu/
Bulgaria - Serbia	http://www.ipacbc-bgrs.eu/
Bulgaria - Turkey	http://www.ipacbc-bgtr.eu/
Croatia - Bosnia and Herzegovina - Montenegro	http://www.interreg-hr-ba-me2014-2020.eu/
Croatia - Serbia	http://www.interreg-croatia-serbia2014-2020.eu/
Greece - Albania	http://www.greece-albania.eu/
Greece - FYROM	http://www.ipa-cbc-programme.eu/
Hungary - Serbia	http://www.interreg-ipa-husrb.com/
Italy - Albania - Montenegro	http://www.europuglia.it/index.php/cte-2014-2020/ipa-ii-cbc-it-al-me
Romania - Serbia	http://www.romania-serbia.net/
Black Sea Basin	http://www.blacksea-cbc.net/
Hungary-Slovakia-Romania-Ukraine	http://www.huskroua-cbc.net/
Mediterranean Sea Basin	http://www.enpicbcmed.eu/
Romania-Moldova	http://www.ro-md.ro-ua-md.net/en/
Romania-Ukraine	http://www.ro-ua.ro-ua-md.net/en/

Annex II - List of CORLEAP members

CORLEAP brings together **36** regional and local politicians (Mayors, or Members of Local and Regional Assemblies or Parliaments): 18 from each of the six Eastern partner countries and **18 from the EU Committee of the Regions**. CORLEAP aims to achieve a political balance and, as far as possible, geographical distribution of its Members.

Each Eastern partner country has three seats. The EU seats are distributed according to the political composition of the Committee of the Regions, divided between its five political groups: European People's Party ([EPP](#)), Party of European Socialists ([PES](#)) Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe ([ALDE](#)), European Alliance ([EA](#)) and the European Conservatives and Reformists Group ([ECR](#)).

Between the CORLEAP meetings, a Bureau acts as a steering body. The Bureau is responsible for coordinating the work of CORLEAP, monitoring its activities, reports and resolutions. It is composed of six members from the partner countries and six members from the CoR representing the European Union. CORLEAP has two co-chairs one representing the partner countries and one representing the EU.

The list of Members of CORLEAP can be found in this link:

<http://cor.europa.eu/en/activities/corleap/Pages/members.aspx>

Annex III Task Forces and Working Groups

The BBSC Members can participate in the following CPMR Working Groups and Task Forces:

WORKING GROUPS

CORE Group (Cohesion) [Further details](#)

Energy and Climate Change [Further details](#)

External Cooperation [Further details](#)

Research Innovation [Further details](#)

Transport (TEN-T) [Further details](#)

Fisheries [Further details](#)

Maritime Spatial Planning [Further details](#)

ERIKA 4 (Maritime safety) [Further details](#)

Maritime industries for blue growth [Further details](#)

Tourism [Further details](#)

TASK FORCES

Macro-Regions [Further details](#)

Ionian Adriatic [Further details](#)

Migration [Further details](#)

Annex IV Banks

Black Sea Trade and Development Bank Website: <http://www.bstdb.org/>

The Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB), an international financial institution with headquarters in Thessaloniki, Greece, was established by Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine. The BSTDB started operations in June 1999 and has authorised capital of €3.45 billion. The Bank supports economic development and regional cooperation in the Black Sea Region through trade and project finance lending, guarantees, and equity participation in private enterprises and public entities in the Member Countries.

European Investment Bank Website: <http://www.eib.org/>

The EIB is the European Union's bank. It is the only bank owned by and representing the interests of the European Union Member States. It works closely with other EU institutions to implement EU policy. As the largest multilateral borrower and lender by volume, the EIB provides finance and expertise for sound and sustainable investment projects which contribute to furthering EU policy objectives. More than 90% of its activity is focused on Europe but it also supports the EU's external and development policies.

World Bank Website: <http://www.worldbank.org/>

The World Bank is a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world. Established in 1944, it has its headquarters in Washington, D.C. with more than 10,000 employees in more than 120 offices worldwide. The World Bank provides low-interest loans, zero to low-interest credits, and grants to developing countries. These support a wide array of investments in such areas as education, health, public administration, infrastructure, financial and private sector development, agriculture, and environmental and natural resource management. The bank also provides or facilitates financing through trust fund partnerships with bilateral and multilateral donors.

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development Website: <http://www.ebrd.com/home>

The EBRD is owned by 65 countries from five continents, as well as the European Union and the European Investment Bank. It was established in 1991, to help build a new, post-Cold War era in Central and Eastern Europe. The EBRD financing for private sector projects generally ranges from \$5 million to \$250 million, in the form of loans or equity. The average EBRD investment is \$25 million. But it also helps small and medium-sized businesses access the business advice they need to grow, succeed, then grow again, becoming genuine catalysts for their local economies and region.

Council of Europe Development Bank Website: <http://www.coebank.org/en/>

The Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) is a multilateral development bank with an exclusively social mandate. Through the provision of financing and technical expertise for projects with a high social impact in its Member States, it actively promotes social cohesion and strengthens social integration in Europe. The CEB represents a major instrument of the policy of solidarity in Europe. It participates in financing social projects, responds to emergency situations and contributes to improving the living conditions of the most disadvantaged population groups. The CEB contributes to the implementation of socially-oriented investment projects through four sectoral lines of action: strengthening social integration, managing the environment, supporting public infrastructure with a social vocation, supporting micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

Annex V – [Provisional Timetable of Actions – Please view BBSC Calendar](#)