BBSC Plenary – online meeting
Minutes

Approved by the 2021 BBSC Annual General Assembly – 15 July 2021 via MS Teams

Tuesday, 27 October 2020
10:00-11:30 CET | 11:00-12:30 EET | 13:00-14:30 GET

The meeting was held in English via Teams

Have participated:

AJARA
Gogi PHUTHKARADZE, Head of International Relations and Protocol Department
Ani JANUKASHVILI, Secretary of the Economic Development Council

ANATOLIKI Makedonia & Thraki
Konstantinos KOURTIDIS, International relations advisor and CPMR representative, 1st Vice-President of the CPMR Balkan and Black Sea Commission
Petros SAMBATAKOS, Head of Brussels Office

Calarasi
Ion SAMOILĂ, Vice-President of the County Council

Dytiki Ellada
Fokion ZAIMIS, Deputy Governor of Entrepreneurship, Research and Innovation, 1st Vice-President of the CPMR Intermediterranean Commission
Aggeliki KOSTOPOULO, Office of the Head of the Region

Ionia Nisia
Konstantinos KAPODISTRIAS, Deputy Governor of eGovernance and European Programmes
Aliki LOUVROU, Advisor - Governor’s Office

Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti
Kristina SHONIA, Assistant of the State Representative

Tirana
Emirjona HUTI, Adviser to the President of the Regional Council
Mr Valentin MOLDOVEANU, Acting President of the Balkan and Black Sea Commission, Tulcea County Councillor (Romania), opened the meeting by welcoming all participants and especially the new CPMR BBSC Member Regions: Ajara, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti (Georgia) and Kherson (Ukraine). He expressed his strong desire to make this Commission stronger and effectiveness. He reminded how important is that the members collaborate and dealt with the common challenges especially in this coming Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) negotiating period. It is important to use on best the new instruments sat up to help countries and regions to face the COVID-19 economic consequences.

The Action Plan, stating the political orientations and future activities that the Balkan and Black Sea Commission should be implemented, should lead the members of the Commission to be more active, involved and open to new members from the Adriatic-Ionian and wider Black Sea regions.

Mr Moldoveanu congratulated the Region of Western Greece, Member of the BBSC, who successfully, together with the Regions of Aragon (Spain) and Tuscany (Italy), leads the Cultural ad Creative Regional Ecosystems (CCRE-S3). CCRE-S3 is a newly established partnership under the Smart Specialisation Platform for Industrial Modernisation of the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre (JRC). CCRE-S3encourages new insights and opportunities related to cultural and creative experiences for local communities and residents, through public-private investments. The Region of Western Greece is the leader responsible for the coordination of the Adriatic-Ionian, Balkan and Black Sea participating regions and countries.

Mr Stavros KALOGNOMOS, Executive Secretary of the CPMR Balkan and Black Sea Commission moved on to administrative matters.

- Ratification of the new Members of the BBSC Political Bureau
Members have unanimously ratified the list presented during the meeting. The mandates of the members run until next BBSC General Assembly that will be held during the spring 2021 (between April-June 2021), where new nominations and election of the President will be organised. *(see the list of the Political Bureau)*

- Amendment of the Rules of Procedure

  The main articles concerned by the amendments are:

  **Article 2 - Membership criteria**

  a. As full members: regions of the States participating in the EU-Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) in the Balkans, including the North-East part of Italy and the Adriatic and the regions of the States participating in the EU Black Sea Synergy initiative in the wider Black Sea area. All BBSC full members should also enjoy full membership status within the CPMR.

  **Article 4 - Political bureau**

  2. The full members of each State, except the new President, will be Vice-Presidents of the BBSC. In order to ensure geographical balance, if the new President comes from a Balkan country, non-bordering the Black Sea, the 1st Vice-President and alternate representative of the BBSC President to the Political Bureau of the CPMR will have to come from a country bordering the Black Sea. In case the new President comes from any Balkan country non-bordering the Black Sea, the 1st Vice-President and alternate representative of the BBSC President to the Political Bureau of the CPMR will have to come from any Balkan country non-bordering the Black Sea. The 1st Vice-President will be appointed by the BBSC President. The Political Bureau elects the three Vice-Presidents of the Commission.

  3. The candidates shall be members of the Political Bureau.

  4. Given that the Rules of Procedure have provided for the substitution of full members of the Political Bureau by substitute members, instruments of proxy shall only be used in case of absolute necessity, and granted to a member of the same Regional Government or Regional Assembly as the full member concerned. If no political representative is available, and only in such cases, proxy can be given, where appropriate, to a senior civil servant who has responsibility for policies within the administration, or to a civil servant who has been authorised by the full member—or if he or she is unable to do so—the substitute member.
The amendments had been proposed in order to enlarge easier the membership applying to the wider area and make the work inside the Commission more effective. The New Rules of Procedure were unanimously approved by the participants.

- Appointment of the 1st Vice-President and list of Political Bureau members

Mr Konstantinos KOURTIDIS, Regional Councillor in charge of International Relations and the CPMR, Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (Greece), was elected 1st Vice-President of the CPMR Balkan and Black Sea Commission. Therefore, Mr Kourtidis will be the Alternate representative of the BBSC President at the CPMR Political Bureau.

The list of the members of the Political Bureau was approved. It will be valid until the next General Assembly that will be organised in spring 2021. At this time, the new Political Bureau will be appointed, and the President for the 2021-2023 period will be elected.

- Point on Financial documents

The Executive Secretary reminded the efforts deployed to make the financial situation better along with the hard work to enlarge the membership.

Then he presented the list of EU projects in which the Commission is involved as full partner, and also mentioned the projects supported or facilitated by BBSC (e.g. DACIAT, BLUE-GREENWAY). He underlined that all these efforts are important in the race for more efficiency, greater visibility and opening to new members.

Regarding membership fees, the CPMR BBSC Members are invited to settle this issue quite in time so that the Secretariat can better plan the work and tasks and get more involved in synergies that allow the successful implementation of the Action Plan.

Completed project

AI-NURECC brought together Regions, Cities, Chambers of Commerce and Universities, which represent the “core partnership”, the key stakeholders of the Adriatic-Ionian region, which have decided to join their efforts aiming at supporting the EUSAIR strategy implementation, ensuring wide territorial coverage at regional and local level.

**Ongoing projects**

- **Maritime Innovative Network of Education for Emerging Maritime Issues (MINE-EMI)**
  The MINE-EMI Project led by Pîrî Reis University (Turkey) and funded by the Erasmus+ Turkish National Agency, is focused on 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. MINE-EMI aims to promote sustainable management of the maritime sector in the wider Black Sea region.

- **Innovative SOft SkillS to Maritime Education and Training (iSOL-MET)**
  The iSOL-MET Project led by the University of the Aegean (Region of North Aegean, Greece) was launched in 2020. iSOL-MET aims to fill gaps and correct skill mismatches in the field of education and to develop skills internationally. It also addresses area specific priorities such as new and innovative curricula, teaching methods, the development of training courses, the fight against skills mismatches (basic/transversal) and the quality and relevance of higher education in partner countries.

- **Improving the existing competences and developing new ones in the aquaculture and fish products trade sector (DACIAT)**
  The BBSC Secretariat facilitated the setting up the consortium of the DACIAT project funded 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 has been invited and participated as a speaker in project events and supports the visibility of the project’s results.
Projects submitted and under evaluation

- **BRIDGE-BS** under Programme Horizon 2020, Call: H2020-BG-2018-2020 (Blue Growth)
- **AI-NURECC PLUS** submitted for funding to DG REGIO
- **Supporting Youth Entrepreneurship in Cultural Tourism for coastal communities in the Black Sea Region** under DG NEAR Grant to BSEC

**PERMIS**

- Discussion of the Action Plan

The Executive Secretary presented the **Action Plan** that lists the **key actions and activities for the mandate** relating to strategies and initiatives covering the wider Balkan and Black Sea regions.

The **political orientations** are focused on:

- **making the most of new EU instruments** (EU Recovery Plan and new Multi-Annual Financial Framework) and **EU policies linked with the Green Deal** for the benefit of the Balkan and Black Sea Regions’ key economic sectors to face the challenges deriving from the Covid-19 outbreak.
- **providing useful feedback and supporting the development and implementation** of the EU strategies and initiatives in the wider Balkan and Black Sea region

- **enhancing 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.

It was strongly encouraged to revive the thematic working groups, to boost cooperation with the European Parliament, to approach potential new partners and regions in order to increase cooperation and build on existing work. Participation in European projects is an integral part of the commission’s work. The Executive secretary reminds the regions the importance of partnerships in the projects and invites them to participate.

Regarding the **Communication strategy**, the Commission had to adapt and develop communication actions to ensure the visibility of the work. More Flash Info will be created and sent. The website of the commission will also continue to be updated with news and
events, both of the commission, and of the relevant events in which the commission is involved. Boosting communication on social networks is part of the objectives.

The Regions are invited to communicate the CPMR their events in order that the Commission can relay the information and also give an input and link with the CPMR issues.

The perimeter of concrete actions, divided by portfolio, to be undertaken by the Balkan and Black Sea Commission’s President and Vice-Presidents to support the activities in accordance with the BBSC membership was mentioned.

**Francesco Catte, CPMR Policy Analyst in charge of the Energy and Transport** updated on the latest CPMR activities carried out in Energy and Climate in the framework of its very active Climate Task Force ([see the PowerPoint presentation](#)). All regions are invited to participate and contribute to the work.

- **Next Annual General Meeting of the Balkan and Black Sea Commission (2021)**
  The next Annual General Meeting will take place in spring 2021.
  It could also be organised back-to-back to a regional or national meeting.
  The calls for the new Political Bureau and the election for the President will be launched in due course.

  **Emirjona Huti, Advisor from Tirana Region**, said that the region will be happy to host any future meeting as it was the case in the framework of the AI-NURECC Initiative in 2018 and 2019.

  **Ani Janukashvili, Secretary of the Economic Development Council from Adjara** added that they will provide the comments regarding the Action Plan soon.

- **CPMR Final Declaration**
  The **CPMR Final Declaration** was presented and adopted unanimously by the Members.

- **Upcoming meetings**
  The BBSC is involved in various high-level conferences.
Mr Valentin Moldoveanu together with the Executive Secretary, thanked participants for their contribution and called for deeper collaboration between members in order to boost the Commission activities and membership. All member regions are kindly invited to participate actively in the coming events and work closely with the CPMR General Secretariat to better coordinate their efforts so that their voice is better heard at Adriatic-Ionia, Balkan, wider Black Sea regional and European levels.

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. One of these Commissions is the Balkan and Black Sea Commission.

November (19)
Webinar on Transport in the Balkans and the Black Sea region

November (26)
The Maritime Innovative Network of Education for Emerging Maritime Issues Project (MINE-EMI Project)

December (03)
SEARICA webinar focused on the Black Sea

December (10)
Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea 2020 Regional Stakeholders’