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BALKAN & BLACK
SEA COMMISSION

MINUTES

Workshop on Project Promotion

28 March 2018, Istanbul, BSEC Headquarters

Opening Speeches

Ambassador Michael B. Christides, Secretary General of the *Permanent International Secretariat* of the Organisation of the *Black Sea Economic Cooperation* ([BSEC](#) PERMIS) welcomed the participants to the new BSEC premises, wishing them a pleasant stay and fruitful discussions, as well as useful networking among them.

The Secretary General reiterated the readiness and willingness of BSEC PERMIS to continue working together with the countries in the region and other interested stakeholders to further develop joint initiatives in a practical, flexible and result-oriented way.

Ms Christiana Kalogirou, President of the [CPMR](#) *Balkan and Black Sea Commission* ([BBSC](#)), Regional Governor of North Aegean, Greece, thanked participants for joining the workshop and the PERMIS hosts for the excellent co-organisation. Ms Kalogirou presented the Region of North Aegean, a group of islands that serves as a gateway between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. It is also a Region holding strong historical and economic bonds with the Black Sea and a keen interest to further develop them. She also presented the CPMR, an Association that brings together approx. 160 Regions from 25 European States, representing about 200 million people and whose main objective is the promotion of a more balanced development among its Members.

Ms Kalogirou stressed that the co-organisation of the Workshop is the result of the long-standing sectoral dialogue partnership between the CPMR and BSEC, a partnership strengthened by the signing of a bilateral [Memorandum of Understanding](#) in April 2017.

The role of Regional Authorities in policy-making

Mr Valentin Moldoveanu, County Councillor, Tulcea County Council, CPMR BBSC Member and Manager of the Danube Delta FLAG (Fisheries Local Action Group), Romania, presented Tulcea County Council's perspective in a detailed [presentation](#) concerning the main challenges for Local and Regional Authorities. He also explained Tulcea County Council's initiatives for better cooperation with foreign counterparts in the wider Black Sea area and in particular the Eastern Partnership frame. He presented examples of two projects that Tulcea County Council is involved in, together with other CPMR Member Regions, "*DACIAT - Improving the existing competences and developing new ones in the aquaculture and fish products trade sector*", which was approved during the first Call of the ENI CBC Black Sea Basin Programme 2014-2020, and "*Coastal Cultural Heritage Management – HERICOAST*", co-funded by the INTERREG EUROPE 2014-2020 Cooperation Programme.

In his [presentation](#), **Dr Roberto Montanari**, Bologna Charter Coordinator from Emilia-Romagna Region (Italy) and CPMR Intermediterranean Commission Member, focused on regional experiences in the Mediterranean area through the [Bologna Charter](#) initiative (BC) and the [CO-EVOLVE project](#). He presented the main features and cooperation areas, as well as concrete actions and projects developed in the BC's Joint Action Plan (JAP). He provided participants with an update on the participatory workshops that aim to identify needs in tourism areas. Then he listed the various significant impacts of the BC in policies, initiatives and EU programmes.

Funding instruments and sustainability of actions

Mr Svetoslav Stoyanov, Policy Officer, Sea Basin Strategies, Maritime Regional Cooperation and Maritime Security (MARE A.3), Directorate-General Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), European Commission, introduced the work of DG MARE, including preparing policies that have a transnational dimension and help to facilitate the creation and implementation of these policies. In his [presentation](#), Mr Stoyanov introduced the "[Facility for Blue Growth in the Black Sea](#)". The Blue Growth Strategy is focused on 5 areas with great potential such as marine biotechnology, ocean energy, sea basin strategies etc. In this context, he referred to the cooperation in the Black Sea related to maritime affairs, through the organization of annual conferences and the *European Maritime Days*, among others, whose aim is to attract attention to the blue economy; the latter was roughly estimated at 500 billion Euros in 2012, providing employment to many people.

Dr Mustafa Yücel, Associate Professor and Vice-Director, Institute of Marine Sciences, Middle East Technical University (METU), Turkey, gave a [presentation](#) on research and education activities concerning the Black Sea and the vision for "Blue Growth". He stated that researchers across the Black Sea countries are working on identifying scientific challenges and research priorities for the Black Sea. Speaking on behalf of the expert Working Group, he stated that this group is representing different fields of study in the Black Sea area (scientists, economy experts etc. = multidisciplinary group). The 4th meeting for *Developing a Blue Growth Initiative for Research and Innovation in the Black Sea* took place the previous day, on 27 March, at the BSEC PERMIS Headquarters. This Working Group aims to build the basis for a new strategic research and innovation agenda for the Black Sea. The Black Sea has been lagging behind in this field and is now catching up. Members of this WG aim to produce a vision paper for a new strategy, an open process supported by all riparian countries of the Black Sea, with their experts actively contributing information on projects and insight into which concrete areas need to be further developed.

Ms Ana Lucia Gheorghe, Programme Manager, Managing Authority, ENI CBC Black Sea Basin Programme 2014-2020, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, Romania, expressed her delight to see many of the former, current and, hopefully, future beneficiaries of the programme she manages participating in the workshop. This is the second-generation programme (the 2014-2020 Black Sea Basin Programme), financed by the European Commission through the European Neighbourhood Instrument and there are 8 countries participating (Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine). She mentioned the previous programme period (2007-2013) in her detailed [presentation](#), which referred to the lessons learnt from the 2007-2013 period. She then shared some sustainability tips for competitive proposals in light of the 2nd Call for Proposals of this programme, foreseen for October 2018.

Due to a last-minute emergency, **Mr Panayotis Gavras**, Head, Policy & Strategy, **Black Sea Trade & Development Bank (BSTDB)** was unable to participate. However, his [presentation](#) on "*Promoting Economic Development and Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea Region – An Overview of the Black Sea Trade & Development Bank*" is available online at the CPMR website.

In his [presentation](#) on the "*Black Sea Project Promotion Facility: Re-inventing the Operational Potential of the Organization*", **Mr Alexandre Gorelik**, Manager of the *Black Sea Project Promotion Facility (BSPPF)*, underlined that the establishment of the Facility is justified by the willingness of BSEC Member States to collectively undertake additional initiatives allowing for substantial economic cooperation.

The BSPPF is preceded by the BSEC *Project Development Fund*, established in 2002, which successfully accomplished more than 25 projects.

In July 2016 the Russian Federation announced its decision to create a novel Black Sea Project Promotion Facility and its intention to provide an initial contribution of 1 million US dollars. The idea received a positive response from BSEC Member States and was a pragmatic move aiming at creating a funding mechanism, capable of promoting the operational activities of BSEC. The Facility fully meets the BSEC PERMIS and the BSTDB administrative and policy requirements. Mr Gorelik presented the mechanisms of the Facility, also available on the BSEC website ([click here](#)) and informed participants on the three projects approved so far.

Dr Flora Karagianni, *European Centre for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Monuments*, Head of the Office for the Promotion of Scientific Research, and **Professor Dr Ufuk Kocabaş**, Istanbul University, Head of *Department of Conservation and Restoration of Artefacts*, presented the “*Cultural Port of the Black Sea*”, the history of the idea and its dynamic development.

In her [presentation](#) Dr Karagianni underlined that the idea for the project started in 2009 as an initiative of the European Centre for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Monuments, a cultural organisation supervised by the Greek Ministry of Culture. The initial idea was to create a cultural network between interested parties; these worked together on a project under the name “*OLKAS: From the Aegean to the Black Sea. Medieval ports in the Maritime Routes of the East*”, implemented from 2012 until 2014. It included several activities, the comprehensive documentation of 45 city ports, the organisation of an International Symposium in Thessaloniki, etc. The success of this first project gave new impetus to the initiative and led to the creation of a new project called OLKAS II. Later, a new project emerged, called “*Limen: Cultural Ports from the Aegean to the Black Sea*”, which ran from 2013 until 2015, with the support of several partners, among them BSEC. The main idea was to start working on, and establish, an [Institution of Cultural Ports of the Black Sea](#).

In his [presentation](#), **Professor Dr Ufuk Kocabaş** further outlined the history and scope of the two Black Sea programmes (OLKAS and LIMEN). He informed that the main focus of activity was an on-board symposium entitled “*City Ports from the Aegean to the Black Sea. Medieval Modern Networks*”, which took place in 2015 with many participants from Black Sea and other countries. Apart from the symposium, it included many events such as receptions, exhibitions, cultural excursions organised, both, on board and in each partner country where the ship docked. He also commented on the concept of “*Cultural ports of the Black Sea*”, stressing that there is great cultural potential in the region, a potential clearly documented through joint projects.

Presentation of the AI-NURECC Initiative (Adriatic Ionian Network of Universities, Regions, Chambers of Commerce and Cities) as an idea for closer Black Sea cooperation

Mr Stavros Kalognomos, Policy Officer, CPMR BBSC, introduced the [AI-NURECC Initiative](#), a project financed by the European Commission. AI-NURECC is an initiative of the key stakeholders of the Adriatic and Ionian Regions, which have decided to join efforts aiming to support the implementation of the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Sea Region ([EUSAIR](#)).

Ms Eleonora Tramannoni, Forum of the Adriatic and Ionian Chambers of Commerce (Forum AIC), in her detailed [presentation](#), informed on the history and the objectives of the AIC, as well as on its working methodology (project-oriented network) and its wide web of international relations.

Presentation of the Black Sea University Network and BSEC Business Council activities

Mrs Rositsa Stoeva, Executive Manager, BSEC PERMIS, underlined that the concept of the AI-NURECC Initiative is an excellent opportunity not only to exchange views on the experiences and best practices from another sea basin, but also to explore the possibility of setting up a similar initiative in the Black Sea area.

Professor Dr Eden Mamut, Secretary General of *Black Sea University Network (BSUN)*, [presented](#) in detail the role of this network in laying bridges in the fields of education, science & innovation in the Black Sea region, especially between BSEC Member States.

“We can talk a lot about cooperation but without having a strong fundament to build upon, it becomes, in many cases, a loss of resources and time”, Professor Mamut stressed. He concluded that it is fundamental to go further and to define an effective mechanism for better linking the universities with the business sector and the communities. Similar initiatives require the development of an appropriate climate and of a framework based on principles and transparency, in order to build trust in the region, concluded Professor Mamut.

Mr Charilaos Alexopoulos, Chairman of the National Committee for the Representation of the Greek Business Community at the BSEC Business Council, in his [speech](#) presented the composition and mission of the BSEC Business Council, which is to promote business cooperation and regional integration. He stressed that Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) are the main focus of the attention of the Business Council, given their importance as major drivers of the national economies of the BSEC Member States. The implementation of the objectives set by the BSEC Business Council are undertaken in close collaboration with other national and international organisations, financial institutions and donors.

As Chairman of the National Committee for the Representation of the Greek Business Community to the BSEC Business Council, Mr Alexopoulos also presented the role of the above Committee, as well as that of the Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Debate with the participants and conclusions, calendar of upcoming BSEC and CPMR meetings

Mrs Rositsa Stoeva, Executive Manager, BSEC PERMIS, informed participants on the most important upcoming BSEC events, such as: Meetings of the Working Group on Science and Technology (3 April), on Education (19 April), on ICT (25 April), on SMEs (4 May), on Energy (15 May), on Culture (21 May), as well as on the three Ministerial meetings, that on Education (20 April), on ICT (16 May) and on Tourism (14 June). The Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, which will be the final event of the current Armenian Chairmanship-in-Office, is scheduled for 21 June. All upcoming events can be found on the BSEC [website](#).

Mr Stavros Kalognomos, Policy Officer, CPMR BBSC, informed participants on the CPMR’s involvement in three workshops, within the framework of “European Maritime Day 2018”, to be held in Burgas on 31 May – 1 June (more precisely, in the workshops entitled “Towards 2030: Foster a sustainable fisheries and aquaculture sector”, “Regional Strategies and Maritime Cooperation: Now and in the Future” and “Between Green and Blue: Sustainability in Marine and Coastal Tourism”). Given, this opportunity, the **2018** CPMR Balkan and Black Sea Commission’s General Assembly is also planned to be held in Burgas on 31 May. The **46th CPMR General Assembly is to be held on 17-19 October 2018**, in **Madeira** (Portugal). All upcoming CPMR events can be found on the CPMR [website](#).

In concluding the event, **Ambassador Christides** thanked all participants for their active participation and expressed the view that it was a successful meeting which may become, with the support of participants and other stakeholders, an annual institution, which BSEC PERMIS will be honoured to host in its premises.