



CONFERENCE OF PERIPHERAL MARITIME REGIONS
**BALKAN & BLACK SEA
REGIONAL COMMISSION**



2014 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

CPMR BALKAN & BLACK SEA REGIONAL COMMISSION

MINUTES

WORKING GROUP ON TOURISM

Kick-off meeting

13 June 2014, Edirne (TR)

Ms Jelina Makrantonaki, Deputy Regional Governor of Central Macedonia (GR), welcomed the participants to the kick-off meeting of the Working Group (hereinafter WG) on Tourism and presented the [terms of reference](#) of the WG on Tourism, led by the Region of Central Macedonia (GR).

Ms Eva Stefanidaki, Researcher, Research in Shipping and Ports ([ReShip](#)) Laboratory, University of the Aegean, presented the [regional priorities within the context of the Strategy for more growth and jobs in Coastal and Maritime Tourism](#), the largest maritime economic activity in Europe.

Mr Radul Kovachev, Secretary General of the International Black Sea Club (IBSC) presented the [priorities of the IBSC for Coastal and Maritime Tourism](#). Mr Kovachev mentioned the fact that Russian, Georgian and Turkish coasts are fortunate in comparison with the western littoral in terms of pollution. He highlighted that tourism is a potential tool for peace-building efforts and that what we lack in the Black Sea region is consistency.

Ms Jelina Makrantonaki noticed that, through meetings, we realize how similar we are yet our differences make collaboration more interesting. She drew special attention to the business model, different types of tourism, and innovation in particular. She then opened the floor to questions.

Mr Apostolos Papafotiou, Deputy Regional Governor of Peloponnese (GR), congratulated the speakers for their high level presentations and noticed that we should always take into consideration the preservation and enhancement of cultural heritage, the effects of coastal and maritime tourism on the environment, and preservation of diversity, whatever we do in the field of tourism. He underlined the connection with the hinterland and the need for synergy between coastal and hinterland tourism, proposing a rebranding of the Black Sea under the name "Efxinos Pontos" (Hospitable Sea) especially in order to have an "Efxinos tourism" released from the "black" in terms of pollution.

Mr Svetoslav Stoyanov, Policy Officer on Maritime Policy Mediterranean and Black Sea, European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), asked Ms Eva Stefanidaki whether it is possible to break down the information gained from the questionnaire, based on the sea basins, and also asked for the profiles of the respondents. Concerning the visibility, Mr Stoyanov mentioned that there are lots of actions and events, and that DG Mare and DG for Enterprise and Industry are dealing with tourism issues. Concerning a common brand he mentioned "Balkans" as a good brand for culinary products which are, taken individually, difficult to differentiate. He suggested to this WG, of different stakeholders, to see what competences they have, and mentioned that in the future there will probably be a scoping mission in the Black Sea region in order to see what each

administration is capable of. Regarding Mr Kovachev's presentation he underlined the importance of organizations such as the IBSC in keeping the bridge between these regions, now with new realities. He also underlined the importance of homegrown initiatives, in which the regions should be leading, and called the members of the WG to come up with initiatives, making their high level public administration aware that some projects are important for them (the regions) and that they have managed to build consensus with other partner countries and regions. Once this is done, the European Commission may contribute with funding and capacity.

Ms Eva Stefanidaki answered that the questionnaire was not anonymous and that a geographical classification of the priorities will be easy. No further geographical separation was presented, in order to create a general context and find a way to address common problems. Regarding the promotion of the regions as cruise destinations, she mentioned that planners have to understand what kind of development we want and to find links between different destinations. As all regions know their competences they should focus on systematization, funding and tools in order to make a procedure and consistently respond to the management objectives.

Mrs Eleni Marianou, Secretary General of the CPMR, mentioned that the Adriatic-Ionian Strategy links with the Danube Strategy which in turn links with the Black Sea. The waters of the inland circulation in the Danube is polluting the Black Sea and creating problems that we may want to address. She also wondered if any actions, policies and projects for depollution have been foreseen in order to foster development. Further, are there any possibilities for funding beyond the Interreg or transnational activity, funding such activities through DG Mare or DG Enterprise, so these people can work together for a project submission. She closed by saying that we should concentrate on what we can do, ie branding to sell new destinations and advantages of the area, or making joint destinations.

Mr Svetoslav Stoyanov answered that DG Mare is not responsible for environmental issues. However there are actions sponsored by the European Commission as a whole and managed by DG Environment. He referred to the [EMBLAS](#) and [MISIS](#) projects, which define mechanisms to assess the condition of the water, consider ways to tackle these problems, and try to bring the countries concerned closer to the European standards. Regarding the question of whether there is a dedicated budget on tourism in the Black Sea, Mr Stoyanov answered that there is not. He recommended to use the budget of CBC Programmes and the Black Sea Synergy. DG Mare tries to put the blue economy and blue sectors in all its programmes. Mr Stoyanov invited the participants to communicate DG Mare if they have interesting projects.

Mr Muhammed Şahin, District Governor, Governorship of Edirne (TR), wonder why the number of tourist arrivals is not as high as it could be and how we could increase accessibility with neighbouring countries and promote our specific tourism potential worldwide.

Ms Jelina Makrantonaki, would like to define the level of accessibility – in terms of geography, transport or marketing – and stated that one of the goals of this WG is to stress our similarities and interesting differences that should make us visit one each other. Regarding the focus of the questionnaire she pointed that we should make small steps to narrow the field of tourism in order to be effective. Finally, she highlighted the role of this WG as a peace instrument, in addition to its focus on business, helping SMEs to use all the instruments that the EU offers.

Mr Bülent Bacıoğlu, Edirne Nature Sports Club Association (TR), recalled the visa issue, which puts obstacles to Turkish citizens visiting the Balkans, and **Ms Elmas Aslan**, President of Women Entrepreneurs, Edirne Chamber of Commerce and Industry (TR), referred to the importance of the participation of private entities, such as women associations, in projects.

Ms Jelina Makrantonaki thanked all participants for their attention and closed the works of the kick-off meeting.