Mr Claudiu Vrinceanu,
State Secretary, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Business Environment of Romania

Thank Governor Saakashvili for the warm welcome in Odessa, Dear Commissioner Vella, Minister Klimkin, Minister Galbur, Mr. Pirinski, Amb. Christides, Dear guests,

Please allow me, on behalf of myself and the Romanian delegation, to thank our hosts for their hospitality. I would also like to thank the European Commission representatives for their contribution and steady support.

It is a privilege for me to participate in this Conference and have the chance to stress once more Romania's dedication to boosting cooperation on marine and maritime affairs in the Black Sea area.

We see the "blue economy" as a great opportunity to enhance economic growth and create new jobs for the benefit of all people in the Black Sea region, and we are persuaded this event will outline new opportunities for pragmatic cooperation.

I really appreciate the presence here of so many stakeholders from riparian states; it illustrates a firm commitment to reaching our common objectives.

After the Bucharest and Sofia conferences in 2014 and 2015, I am convinced that this year's edition will be a new opportunity for enhancing our dialogue and advancing future projects.

Romania continues to advocate the need for strong and dynamic regional cooperation in various the various fields covered by the integrated maritime policy, which range from maritime and coastal tourism to fisheries management, from the protection of marine environment to navigation safety, from seabed mining to offshore energy, not to mention transport or maritime security.

We also support a strategic approach of the EU for the Black Sea and coherent EU policies dedicated to the neighborhood.

We have worked together in order to identify ways and means of enhancing the development potential of the Black Sea, we now need to continue our efforts in order to ensure the coherence of our initiatives and maximize the benefits of available financing opportunities.

We can build upon our experience within existing cooperation mechanisms and count on the support of the European Union.

Romania gives a particular importance to the stability and prosperity of the Black Sea region. The regional cooperation represents an essential pillar of the Romanian foreign policy, its principles being constantly and actively promoted through various formats.

Regional cooperation at the Black Sea within BSEC represents a priority objective for RO, as a founding member of BSEC and as a member state actively involved in the activity of the organization.

We support the streamlining of interconnections between all policies and instruments illustrating the EU's commitment for the Black Sea region (Black Sea Synergy, Integrated Maritime Policy, EU Maritime Security Strategy, EU's Neighborhood Policy, and EU's Strategy for the Danube region). We are currently focusing on ensuring a coordinated and efficient implementation of their practical elements.

We look forward to the start of the technical assistance project announced by the Commission and to the next meeting of national contact points; we will actively participate and contribute with all our resources and experience to the progress of this key new venture.

We encourage our partners from non-EU riparian states to join our initiatives, such as the Romanian – Bulgarian project on maritime spatial planning, and actively participate in new projects.

As you know, the EU's 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework offers us numerous opportunities in this regard.

The new Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme 2014-2020 (to be launched in Constanţa, Romania, on July 14th) will be, for instance, a great tool for increasing cooperation among stakeholders on tourism and environmental affairs.

Our priorities should include developing our own national maritime strategies, as well as initiating multisector and multinational projects, within an inclusive process.

In the tourism field for instance, we will focus on achieving established objectives (integrated management of the coastal area through protection and rehabilitation project and beaches and shoreline protection projects), creating a synergy between the economic environment, local communities and environmental protection.

We currently implementing a project of national interest, the largest one for maritime infrastructure, with a total value of the project is 970 million euro, from which the European Union has financed 170 million euro. 42 hectares of new beach were created in the first phase of the project, and subsequently the beaches will be extended up to the border with Bulgaria.

Our region is endowed with valuable potential for the tourism activity. The development of the seaside tourism sector in a competitive, sustainable, modern and responsible manner could ensure great added value and the improvement of the Romania touristic image.

In the current context, each riparian state should adopt a responsible approach on protection and improvement of the environmental quality and life standards in the seaside region of the Black Sea, with a focus on protected areas and specific ecosystems preservation.

I am convinced that the shaping of a common maritime agenda for riparian states (in the larger framework of the Black Sea Synergy) can trigger the significant growth potential of the blue economy.

I wish you and I wish all of us every success.