Closing remarks

- Today’s Second Black Sea Stakeholder Conference is a further, significant step undertaken together, by the coastal States and regions of the Black Sea, businesses and stakeholders from shipping to tourism, from fisheries to the environment, NGOs, civil society and the European Commission, to strengthen the regional cooperation on marine and maritime affairs in the Black Sea.

- I believe that following our exchanges of views a number of conclusions can be drawn from the various panel discussions:

- First of all, it is clear that the blue economy in the Black Sea matters, and meetings such as the one held today play an important role to raise awareness about its scope and potential. Our intention is to add value in the process by advocating for the integration of interdependent policies. At the European Commission, we want to help maritime stakeholders to build up their capacities, and we will support projects in emerging areas, to make growth felt by the coastal communities and taking into consideration the different objectives and aspirations of each State and region.

- Let me underline that existing cooperation mechanisms should not be replaced but further synergies and complementarities need to be built.

- Secondly, I think many good examples have been mentioned today of how innovation and smart cooperation between stakeholders can produce concrete results. Over the next years, the EU will invest in innovation, smart and sustainable growth. Future funding opportunities available for the Black Sea should be used to sustain blue growth. Today's level of participation can be considered not only as a sign of interest from you but also as a sign of future commitment to enforce what we started to build over the past years and what we want to build during the coming years.

- Thirdly, allow me to repeat what Commissioner Vella emphasized this morning, that your input will shape our policies in this sea basin.

- Bringing businesses together, be it to create and develop together new opportunities or work on innovation and skills of people is crucial. Public authorities at all levels, are responsible for creating the right and balanced framework for such activities.

- Fourth, it is clear that future actions will be built in many small steps and in full consideration of what already exists and is being done. Your support and cooperation for a dedicated project for technical support on maritime policy is essential. The project will be open to national, regional and local authorities, particularly also in the non-EU countries of the Black Sea, to develop maritime policy approaches in their respective policies.

- This conference and your active participation all throughout have demonstrated that there is clear interest in advancing our blue sectors together. In this respect, it gives me great pleasure to inform you that Ukraine has accepted the offer to look into the possibility of organising the next Black Sea Stakeholder Conference in 2016.

- In the meantime, we all have a lot of work to do, to make things happen, to develop the different activities in and around the Black Sea.

- Finally, I want to thank the interpreters and the organising team for making this event happen so smoothly and thank you all once more for your participation.