Sustainable development of the blue economy of the Black Sea

Enhancing marine and maritime cooperation

Bucharest, Romania, 30 January 2014

Summary of Presentations and Discussions

OPENING SESSION

Moderation

Mr Titus CORLĂȚEAN
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania

Speakers

Ms Rovana PLUMB, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Romania

Ms Maria DAMANAKI, EU Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

Mr Iulian GROZA, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration, Republic of Moldova

Mr Shalva AMIREJIBI, Ministry of Environment Protection, Georgia

Mr Manuel DONESCU, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Transport, Romania

Mr Aleksander FILIPOV, Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria in Romania

Opening remarks

Mr Titus CORLĂȚEAN, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania, opened the conference on *Sustainable development of the blue economy of the Black Sea: Enhancing marine and maritime cooperation*.

Speaker: Ms Rovana PLUMB

Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Romania

Ms Rovana PLUMB, Minister of Environment and Climate Change of Romania, welcomed the participants as well as the representatives of the European Commission (EC) and Commissioner Ms Maria Damanaki and transmitted a message in the name of H.E. Mr Victor PONTA, Prime Minister of Romania.

Ms PLUMB referred to the political involvement of the countries neighbouring the Black Sea (BS) to contribute to a common interest programme and to capitalise the potential of the BS for the benefit of the citizens. In this regard, she pointed out blue growth constitutes an opportunity of concrete incentives for economic growth and jobs in the region as well as a coherent approach with respect to the initiatives of the EC. At the same time it is attesting the benefits of a solid partnership and a flexible cooperation, especially in the area of maritime affairs.

It is important to identify complementary areas between the policy of the European Union (EU) and its instruments and the regional mechanisms already in place. In this sense it is essential to develop a pragmatic partnership between the EU and the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), which among others deals with questions related to environmental protection, maritime science and technologies, education, tourism, culture and business environment.

Ms PLUMB welcomed the start of this partnership programme and pointed at the efforts already made under the energy[1] and also the transport[2] partnerships in order to strengthen the corridor between the EU and the Caspian and Asian markets.

Ms PLUMB also referred to the Romania-Bulgaria Trans-Border Cooperation Programme (2007–2013) co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) which, among others, has the aim to improve the Danube and BS mobility as well as the access to transport infrastructure.

Besides, the project Danube – Black Sea Connection of European and Asian Economy (DABSEA)[3] focuses on improving the capacity of players and support alternative routes to connect the BS and the Danube, also as a contribution to decreasing pollution caused by other means of transport.

Also research activities are implemented with regard to the sustainable use of maritime resources or the monitoring and rehabilitation of the environmental quality in rivers, deltas and seas, as for example a project that is going to be implemented in the Danube delta at Murighiol[4]. This is an initiative that integrates education, research and development goals in the area of the BS. The focus is on the creation of an *international advanced studies centre*, enabling to identify the most effective ways to stimulate cooperation in the framework of new sectoral programmes that are mutually beneficial. In this regard, it is important to establish contacts between all stakeholders and interested players such as local institutes, research institutes, universities, producers associations, environmental organisations, port associations or NGOs.

Ms Plumb closed her address by underlining that the Prime Minister of Romania is convinced that the outcomes of todays' discussions will be of use for all participating countries.

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1 INterstate Oil and GAs Transport to Europe (INOGATE) Programme
2 TRAnsport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA) Programme
3 http://dabsea.ro/en
4 Uzlina-Murighiol Research Centre of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve

Mr Titus CORLĂȚEAN (Chair) took the floor by saying that it is a privilege to host the present conference initiated by Commissioner Damanaki. He stressed that Romania is very dedicated to boosting cooperation in the BS area and thanked Ms Damanaki for her personal commitment.

Mr CORLĂȚEAN noted that all riparian states' representatives are present at the conference and presented the key note speakers. He described this event as an excellent opportunity to reach common objectives and invited to take advantage of this meeting for drafting new projects. After this, he gave the floor to Commissioner Ms Damanaki.

Key note addresses

Keynote Speaker: Ms Maria DAMANAKI

European Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries

Speech available at http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-14-82_en.htm

Keynote Speaker: Mr Titus CORLĂȚEAN

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania

Minister **Titus CORLĂȚEAN** took the floor and stated that Romania has acknowledged the need for a strong regional cooperation as well as for coherent policies dedicated to the neighbourhood. The speaker highlighted that the progress with regard to the Black Sea Strategy has been uneven while the potential of the BSEC or other initiatives remains unfulfilled.

The Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme (2007–2013) has proven that there is a huge demand for cooperation projects, however, its funding is limited; therefore, a more vigorous and pragmatic approach is needed.

The present conference aims at stimulating the work together. In order to move forward, it is important to identify together areas of complementarity between European policies and instruments on one hand and already existing cooperation mechanisms on the other. The speaker invited to consider the BS as a space of conversions for specific objectives and interests rather than a port border dividing the states. As economic growth goes hand in hand with competiveness and investments, it is in the best interest to promote a more integrated approach of maritime affairs. In this regard, the blue economy is seen as a great opportunity to raise growth and employment to the benefit of all people on the shores of the BS.

Mr CORLĂȚEAN observed that a considerable proportion of interests lay on marine and maritime affairs, ranging from fisheries management, coastal tourism, protection of the marine environment, navigation and safety to seabed mining, off-shore energy, transport and maritime security. In this context, stakeholders are asked to identify precise objectives and

concrete expectations in a cooperative environment, while the EU could play an important role in supporting these joint efforts.

Both Romania and EC support the consolidation of regional cooperation at the BS in order to achieve an improved coherence of EU initiatives by way of cooperation formats benefiting the entire region. Romania is favouring a substantial cooperation EU-BSEC in a pragmatic and flexible manner, which could allow BSEC to become a solid partner of the EU.

Romania strongly supports and welcomes the initialling of the EU's association agreements with Georgia and the Republic of Moldova during the Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius in November 2013. The signing and ratification of these agreements will enhance the EU-BSEC interaction to the benefit of the entire region.

Having both the Hellenic Republic holding the EU Presidency and the Republic of Bulgaria holding the BSEC chairmanship in the first semester of 2014, there is the chance to streamline efforts in order to achieve concrete results in the BSEC-EU interaction. In this regard, this conference offers the opportunity to voice the BSEC views on a multitude of sectors encompassing maritime transport and related infrastructure, protection of the environment, maritime economy and tourism.

Mr CORLĂȚEAN underlined that a coherent EU approach for the BS basin is needed in order to reap all the potential benefits. Romania will continue supporting the streamlining of interactions between internal and external EU policies and instruments relevant for the BS region, thus the Black Sea Synergy, EU Strategy for the Danube Region and the Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP). Geographically and thematically the Danube and the BS regions are strongly interlinked and form a continuum. Therefore, an integrated EU approach would be beneficial for both regions, based on synergies of EU instruments and organisations in the region. Romania will support this goal, including in its capacity of host of the management authority of the Black Sea Basin Cross-Border Cooperation Programme for the period 2014–2020. The expected outcome of these initiatives is an increased capacity of non-EU partners to access EU funding instruments relevant for sea basin cooperation, be they dedicated to research and development (R&D) or to cross-border cooperation. In this context, he looked forward to the conference in Greece end of May on EU neighbourhood and BS cooperation, research and innovation in the marine and maritime domain.

Mr CORLĂȚEAN highlighted the blue economy as an opportunity for growth. As said by the Commissioner, a project-oriented method can substantially contribute to tapping the region’s potential for development. Littoral states should continue working together and initiate new projects within the priority fields. Romania supports the direct and comprehensive dialogue of the states in the region among themselves and with the European institutions, and is grateful to the EC for the offer to set up a dedicated project of technical support on maritime integration in the BS.

The speaker welcomed the dialogue between states during the conference and asked for a further involvement of stakeholders in a pragmatic and bottom-up approach. He concluded by saying that Romania is ready to cooperate with all partners interested in the development of the BS region, contributing with its resources and experience to this key political project. It is now our responsibility to advance a sustainable use of the sea to the benefit of the generations to come. A combination of political will and coherent action will offer the

possibility to fulfil the remarkable potential of this region, being a major contribution to its stability and security as well as to the property of our citizens.

Keynote Speaker: Mr Iulian GROZA

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova

Deputy Minister **Iulian GROZA** thanked the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania and the EC for organising this important conference which will strengthen the dialogue between the interested parties within the BS area in marine and maritime topics.

Although the cooperation in the BS area has a long lasting history, there is still a large potential for its further deepening. The speaker expressed his confidence that today's discussions will provide an opportunity to clarify the framework and political support under the BS synergy.

The idea of the blue economy has gradually been gaining acceptance among the states of the BS area, driven by the consciousness that the seas are a treasure which shall be boosted to the benefit of the people through a strategy of sustainable development.

The BS basin has a great potential for development of the sectors related to the blue economy such as maritime transport, coastal tourism or blue energy. All these sectors could become very successful if the synergies between industries, research and maritime clusters are promoted, which will lead to the development of a cross-sector maritime cooperation, having in mind the objective of development and growth, attracting regional funds and investments.

The Republic of Moldova pays particular attention to the development of new opportunities for the Giurgiulesti International Free Port (GIFP), which is located on the maritime segment of the Danube River. The exploitation of this port gives a good opportunity for developing the multi-modal transport sector, while benefiting from its location on an international trade and transport route such as the Rhine-Main-Danube waterway corridor which connects Moldova with the BS.

Mr Groza finalised his address by saying that in the forthcoming period all efforts should target projects and activities aiming at increasing the competitiveness of the region, promoting the culture of knowledge, safety and human welfare. This aim is reachable, provided that a regional partnership is to put in place, to which the Republic of Moldova is ready to make its modest contribution.

Keynote Speaker: Mr Shalva AMIREJIBI

Deputy Minister of Environment Protection and Natural Resources of Georgia

Deputy Minister **Shalva AMIREJIBI** stated his gratitude to the EC and to the Government of Romania for hosting the present conference and expressed his pleasure to be there to

discuss the sustainable development of the blue economy in the BS to enhance the marine and maritime cooperation.

Transport is of high relevance for the country's economy and constitutes the heart of its supply chain. Areas without good transport connections do not grow or prosper. In this regard, Georgia is not an exemption: Its BS ports, the well-developed railway system as well as the east-west highway clearly demonstrate the important contribution that transport makes to the national economy. According to the speaker, the sustainable development of the blue economy in the BS region is directly linked with the reduction of barriers for international trade thanks to regional cooperation, implementation of infrastructure projects, capacity building among transport employees and enhancing transport safety, security and environmental protection.

Georgia actively works for the development of the maritime sector. Particular attention is paid to the improvement of maritime and port policy, to the didactical supervision of vessels registered in Georgia and to issues related to seafarers training and certification. Georgia also strives to enhance the development of port infrastructure. In this regard, the construction of a new deep sea port in Anaklia is of strategic importance and shall result in significant increase in cargo turnover in the territory of Georgia. Currently, work is underway for the elaboration of specific mechanisms and measures for the realisation of this project.

Mr AMIREJIBI underlined that, in terms of regional cooperation, Georgia has been an active participant of the EU TRACECA[5] programme. The aim is to ensure that the outcomes of the implemented projects contribute to the competitiveness and attractiveness, facilitate further trade liberalisation and remove barriers along the whole corridor. Moreover, Georgia is an active member of the BSEC which plays a significant role in establishing sustainable and safe transport systems.

In November 2013, the association agreement between Georgia and the EU was initialled. The document defines obligations for Georgia to complement the transport and environmental directives and regulations in Georgian legislation. This association agreement shall serve as a comprehensive legal basis for the achievement of a safe and environmental friendly transport system in Georgia. The implemented reforms will enhance the sustainable development of the blue economy in Georgia as well as in the BS region. In this regard, it is essential to receive EU support through technical assistance, twinning programmes, etc.

All BS countries share the goal of creating a technically and economically integrated maritime transport system, thus, with the highest safety and environmental requirements while embracing the social concerns. Mr AMIREJIBI concluded by saying that such meeting shall give new incentives to the BS countries for coordinated cooperation in maritime and marine transport routes.

[5] TRACECA: Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia

Keynote Speaker: Mr Manuel DONESCU

Deputy Minister of Transport of Romania

Deputy Minister **Manuel DONESCU** spoke on behalf of Ms Ramona MĂNESCU, Minister for Transport of Romania. Mr DONESCU first congratulated in the name of the Minister the main organisers of this event, the EC and the Romanian Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

The BS region has been given the opportunity to present its operation and common objectives with a view to better defining its identity. In doing so, the BS region will stabilise its role in an extended European and international context. During the present conference, the aim is to promote an active dialogue between all regional stakeholders to facilitate a constructive engagement in the region.

By participating in this event, the history and the multiple prolific activities undergone so far in the BS region are acknowledged. Together, the premises for future positive actions can be created; these will allow capitalising the resources and potential of the BS region. The common interest is to actively combine all efforts and transform the BS region into an area of true security, democracy and prosperity.

For Romania the BS is not just the immediate geographic neighbourhood, but a region of high priority due to its key geostrategic position. The ambition lays in boosting cooperation in the fields of common interest and advance new cooperation project among the riparian states without prejudices to existing cooperation formats. The objective for Romania is to develop concrete projects in order to increase the economic benefits and social opportunities and to ensure a sustainable economic development and a strong confidence.

Mr DONESCU referred to Romania's active participation at the BSEC in order to implement the transport projects, such as the development of the Motorways of the Sea (MoS) – project connecting the BS ports – or the permanent technical secretariat to be held from May 2015 to April 2017 by the national company Maritime Ports Administration of Constanța. Besides, Romania will hold for the 3rd time the presidency of the BSEC transport working group between July 2015 and June 2017.

In order to ensure the connection to and from the BS region, the Danube River is needed. Romania is developing several projects for ensuring the safe and reliable navigation conditions, e.g. together with Bulgaria. Besides, it is also coordinating together with Austria the priority area of inland waterways within the EU Strategy for the Danube Region launched in 2010. The speaker referred to the Declaration on effective waterway infrastructure maintenance on the Danube and its navigable tributaries signed in Luxemburg in June 2012 where the Ministers of Transport from the Danube region took the engagement to ensure the proper maintenance of the Danube River.

The Ministry of Transport is currently finalising the general transport master plan that includes a strategy for the development of the transport sector in Romania which takes into account the maritime policy agenda and identifies a set of key priorities for naval investment. Mr DONESCU concluded by saying that opening new cooperation initiatives and reinforcing the existing ones will boost regional stability and development in the wider BS region and

expressed his belief that this event may create the premises for concrete partnerships among BS countries.

Keynote Speaker: Mr Aleksander FILIPOV

Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria in Romania

Ambassador **Aleksander FILIPOV** presented a message in the name of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria. Mr FILIPOV expressed his pleasure to attend the conference and have the opportunity to discuss the blue economy and the ways to stimulate it in the BS region. This motion has many aspects which require a comprehensive approach and the active involvement of all stakeholders.

The BS region has its own characteristics and challenges and is a region of particular importance in terms of geopolitics, economy, infrastructure, communications, energy supply and security. The accession of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU has provided direct access of the Union to the BS. The growing interest of the EU in the region has resulted in launching two important initiatives: The Black Sea Synergy and the Eastern Partnership. Bulgaria, as new EU MS and a BS country, is an active participant in both of them. Furthermore, Bulgaria is member and current Chairman-in-office of BSEC. Every effort will be done to achieve a better synergy between the different actors in the BS area, taking also into consideration that the three countries from the region that are EU MS, Bulgaria, Romania and Greece, are presiding respectively BSEC, the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) and the Council of the EU.

The creation of synergies between BSEC and other formats of EU wide and regional organisations will be one of the goals of the Bulgarian Chairmanship. A good coordination between BSEC and EU is an essential condition for EU Presidency and the EC, which have included the IMP high on their agendas.

Another important priority during the Bulgarian Chairmanship is the encouragement of cooperation between the BS and the Danube regions as well as between the BS and the Adriatic and Ionian region within the framework of EU macro-regional strategies. Besides, efforts will be put to further promote interaction in the areas of transport, youth and sports, health care, information and communication technologies, agriculture, combatting crime as well as encouragement of closer cooperation among the business communities from all countries of the BS. This will achieved among others by organising business forums and by promoting incentives to stimulate SMEs and their interactions at a regional level.

Mr FILIPOV highlighted that all priorities are achievable through joint efforts and that a result-oriented approach will deliver tangible results for common problems, not only in the BS region but also in Europe. Blue growth is a chance to sustainably exploit the BS and has a huge potential to foster innovation as well as to create sustainable jobs. The speaker concluded by saying that the next stakeholder conference on maritime cooperation in the BS will be organised by Bulgaria next year.

After this contribution, **Mr CORLĂȚEAN (Chair)** expressed his satisfaction for the open and constructive ideas stated so far. The views expressed by the key note speakers have confirmed the common commitment to enhance the regional dialogue and to boost cooperation in marine and maritime affairs in the BS area. He closed the session by saying that the following debates of the stakeholders will hopefully be the starting point for future projects in the various areas proposed by the agenda of the conference. Finally, he thanked again the European Commissioner, the various delegations representing all riparian states of the BS region as well as the Secretary General of BSEC for attending the conference.

PANEL 1: Partnership in the Region to Foster Maritime Cooperation

Moderation

Prof Dr Dimitrios TRIANTAPHYLLOU
Kadir Has University Istanbul

Panelists:

Ambassador Dr Victor TVIRCUN, Secretary General of the Permanent International Secretariat of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC PERMIS)

Dr Valeria ABAZA, Pollution Monitoring & Assessment Officer, Permanent Secretariat of the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (BSC)

Ambassador David KERESELIDZE, Director General of the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS)

Ms Olivia BACIU, President of the Black Sea NGO Forum/Romanian NDGO Platform (FOND)

The moderator, **Prof Dr Dimitrios TRIANTAPHYLLOU** from the Kadir Has University in Istanbul, opened Panel 1 which, according to the speaker, is meant to be a sort of an overview policy panel. He focused on some of the concepts previously raised by the European Commission such as clusters, sustainability, stakeholders as well as the fact of giving the BS region the right of initiative. According to the moderator, these would be some of the discussion topics that are expected in this panel. Afterwards, he presented all the panelists, describing them as a varied group of stakeholders representing the major regional organisations, the think tank and the research community, as well as the NGO community.

Speaker: Ambassador Dr Victor TVIRCUN

Secretary General of the Permanent International Secretariat of BSEC

Ambassador Dr Victor TVIRCUN highlighted the very good opportunity posed by this event to exchange views and perspectives on the BS region and to increase synergies regarding different questions and fields of activity.

The speaker then turned his attention to the principle of sustainable development within the BS region aiming at ensuring the rational balance between economic growth, social responsibility and environmental protection. In this regard, he welcomed the initiative of the EC and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania to organise this event.

Maritime cooperation relates to different areas. Since its inception, the BSEC has paid special attention to cooperation in transport, focusing on how to utilise effectively the inter-region capacity and the growing transit potential of the BS region. BSEC has developed several regional projects which are mutually complementary. One of them is the project

Motorways of the Sea (MoS) aiming at strengthening the maritime links among the ports of the BS member states. This action includes the upgrading of port facilities, the identification of projects of common interest, securing free and fair competition in international shipping, facilitation of access to all modes of transport and enhancement of maritime security and safety. Another issue of consideration within the working group on transport is the elaboration of a regional integrated maritime policy in the fields of maritime transport, ports, shipbuilding and ship repairing in the BSEC region.

Recently, the Russian Federation and the Ukraine made a proposal for extending the activities of BSEC to include also the development of multimodal transport. These initiatives are expected to broaden the maritime cooperation by including different modes of transport and by creating horizontal synergies.

Tourism is another important issue stipulated as a priority in the economic agenda. BSEC member states are investing their efforts in elaborating a regional tourism management programme that prioritises the efficient use of resources in the region. Ensuring sustainable tourism development by adopting green growth strategies will enable an economic growth while preserving natural and cultural heritage. Maritime and multicultural tourism cooperation is a permanent item on the agenda of the working group of cooperation in tourism.

Last year, during the International Tourism Forum in Kiev, there were many proposals to extend the cooperation in the field of tourism in the BS region. A very close contact was established between BSEC and the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), which are in the process of signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). In fact, last December the status of partner to the BSEC was accepted for the UNWTO. Furthermore, the discussion on tourism has been put on the agenda of the next working group's meeting in Yalta at the end of February.

Climate change and environmental protection have been defined by the BSEC member states from the outset as priority fields of cooperation in the BS area. Today, they constitute key factors for a sustainable economic development of the countries in the region. In recent meetings, the working group on environment protection focused on the elaboration of a BSEC climate change adaptation strategy, which is also relevant for maritime cooperation.

Ambassador TVIRCUN highlighted that strengthening the BSEC-EU relationship is also a priority for BSEC. He observed that the dialogue between the two organisations has gained a new dynamic and stressed that BSEC endeavours to give a practical content to this cooperation. BSEC is also in the process of enhancing its capacity for implementing projects through regular sittings of the project management unit and the Secretariat. In addition, BSEC member states are trying to implement the economic agenda adopted in the summit of June 2012, but they are not doing this alone, they are also working with other observers' countries, organisations and sectoral partners. Besides, they have also started to increase the cooperation not only with institutions but also with NGOs, with academic spheres as well as with the business community.

Speaker: Dr Valeria ABAZA

Pollution Monitoring & Assessment Officer of the Permanent Secretariat of the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (BSC)

Dr Valeria ABAZA – in reaction to a respective question of the chairman – mentioned that a collaboration has been established with BSEC, particularly with its group of environmental protection. However, she observed that it is easier for BSC to collaborate with scientists since a specific platform has been set up for this purpose: there are specific conferences which are organised every 2 years. For example, last year in October, a scientific conference was organised in Constanța, Romania, on various fields of marine environmental protection of the BS.

BSC has also established cooperation with NGOs on different aspects of environmental protection of the BS. Besides, MoU have been signed with different international organisations on different aspects of environmental protection, but not only. For example, MoUs have also been signed with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) or also the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

After this, Prof Dr TRIANTAPHYLLOU raised the topic of business groups and research clusters and, in this context, he asked Dr ABAZA how these groups could be involved into the process in order to promote the blue economy and the sustainable development in the BS region.

Dr ABAZA suggested that common projects would be beneficial, having as partners the scientific institutions on one hand and for example small enterprises or also business organisations on the other, so that a common ground for action can be found. According to the speaker, scientific research is essential for developing any kind of business in the area. However, in her opinion, environmental protection is being left aside. Being a semi-enclosed basin, the BS is a very sensitive area so if the riparian states do not act very carefully, environmental problems could arise.

At this point, **Ambassador TVIRCUN** took the floor and said that the BSEC working group on education is preparing an international conference, to be held most probably in October this year, where they will combine academic field and business. The objective of this conference titled “Professional education and economic needs in the Black Sea region” will be to connect the business community and academic and educational sphere.

After this contribution, the moderator turned to **Ambassador David KERESELIDZE**, Director General of the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS), and described this institution as the think tank of BSEC. He highlighted that ICBSS has been trying to strengthen the research community and enhance the regional dimension as well as promoting the cooperation between EU and BSEC.

Speaker: Ambassador David KERESELIDZE

Director General of the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS)

Ambassador **David KERESELIDZE** explained that the ICBSS is a body related to BSEC that deals with research and academic matters. It works also on maritime issues, although not exclusively, and has a wide experience in this field, including related sectors like tourism, energy, environment, etc. which are on both the BSEC and ICBSS agendas. The ICBSS' primary strategy is moving to a green BS, introducing the concepts of sustainable development, green innovation and governance. Besides, an initiative has been launched for the creation of an innovative web geographic information system (GIS) observatory network for the environment and sustainable development of the BS area. Moreover, they have been involved in several projects related also to other topics, for example with the Hellenic Development Fund, with which they have collaborated in a research project on renewable energy resources[6]. ICBSS has also finalised 2 projects in science and technology within an international cooperation network of central-Asian countries.

Ambassador KERESELIDZE underlined that maritime questions are very complex but that the ICBSS has the experience in research and innovation to contribute to the idea and to the common platform on maritime issues.

Prof Dr TRIANTAPHYLLOU (Chair) then turned to **Ms Olivia BACIU**, President of the Black Sea NGO Forum/Romanian NDGO Platform (FOND), by highlighting that this speaker represents the NGO community as she has been leading the BS NGO Forum as overarching organisation for the NGOs of the region across a variety of fields of interest. The moderator addressed the question whether the integrated approach in maritime cooperation is a topic that is discussed in the NGOs community and how this could be brought into the activities of these organisations. Besides, he also asked if the cooperation with NGOs is already taking place and how this could be enhanced.

Speaker: Ms Olivia BACIU

President of the Black Sea NGO Forum/Romanian NDGO Platform (FOND)

Ms BACIU took the floor by explaining that the Romanian NDGO Platform founded in a common effort the Black Sea NGO Forum back in 2008 in collaboration with different civil society organisations from the BS extended region, with the support of the Romanian Foreign Affairs Ministry, the Representation of the EC in Romania and the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation. The forum is now in its 6th edition and constitutes a unique platform and a vehicle where different stakeholders, representatives from the government, intergovernmental organisation and the civil society have a say, can expose their views and exchange experiences.

[6] "Green Cluster of Knowledge Institutions of the Black Sea: A Roadmap on Renewable Energy Sources and Energy Efficiency for Research and Academic Institutions"

An impact study was carried out last year reaching more than 900 persons representing organisations from the BS. One of the concrete results of the forum was the creation of the "Child Pact", a "Regional Coalition for Child Protection in the Wider Black Sea Area"[7] which is acknowledged by the NGO Forum. A further important result was the creation of a "Youth Network" in 9 countries, now being led by the Republic of Moldova. These initiatives show that platforms do exist and are used as meaningful vehicles for change.

Getting back to the moderator's question on the integrated sea basin maritime policy, Ms BACIU admitted that this particular policy has not been part of the Forum's agenda in the past 6 years, although the issue has been discussed with the stakeholders with the aim of finding solutions. As lesson learnt, the speaker concluded that there is work to do in the future in order to have the civil society better understanding what this policy means, also in terms of engaging the civil society's networks and platforms in order to feedback and translate this policy. The speaker underlined that there is place for improvement and that the policy will be considered in the next edition of the Black Sea NGO Forum. She also stressed that there is definitely potential, being the Forum a unique platform in the region for stakeholders to discuss in a motivating and challenging environment and come up with solutions that can e.g. translate into policies.

After Ms BACIU's speech, **Prof Dr TRIANTAPHYLLOU (Chair)** highlighted that the panellists, as regional stakeholders, have in common that the notion of ownership is present, which is in line with the EU approach. Furthermore, he underlined the element of the bottom-up approach, as opposed to the top-down approach, for example when NGOs take the lead in discussing issues and have thus an impact on policy.

The moderator then turned again to **Ambassador TVIRCUN** referring to the top-down approach that characterises BSEC and asked how BSEC can work together with the research community and the NGOs. According to Prof Dr TRIANTAPHYLLOU, this is not only a question of bringing them together but, above all, of getting them to have an influence and an impact on policies. The moderator stressed again the bottom-up approach as a crucial aspect and, considering the relevance given to BSEC in this conference, he asked whether this institution has to adapt, possibly reinvent itself, in order to respond to this need.

Ambassador TVIRCUN replied by affirming that BSEC is not an organisation that is isolated from society or non-governmental structures. For example, during the working groups and particularly during other events provided by BSEC, there is the possibility to submit initiatives and proposals. Last year, for example, at least 8 non-governmental structures came to BSEC and presented their proposals and ideas and most of them were accepted.

Besides, ICBSS has started to collaborate in the topic of child protection with the support of BSEC. Recently, when the Republic of Bulgaria, as chair in office of BSEC, adopted the calendar of events, it also presented the priorities for the present chairmanship. These included the new priorities of sports and youth, including child protection as one of the goals of these activities. The speaker stressed that the links to the NGOs are very important to BSEC. For example, this institution is trying to be attractive for the business community, e.g. by being useful to SMEs, also through the Business Council, a BSEC related non-

[7] http://www.childpact.org/

governmental body that works for the improvement of the business and environment throughout the BS region.

After this contribution, **Prof Dr TRIANTAPHYLLOU** concluded the first session by saying that the spotlight is now on the region and on how to react to make this strategy successful.

PANEL 2: Blue Growth: The Integrated Maritime Policy

Speaker: **Ms Monique PARIAT**

Director, Mediterranean and Black Sea, DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), European Commission

Title: Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) & Blue Growth

Ms Monique PARIAT opened the session by saying that the purpose of her presentation is to explain better what is behind the Blue Growth agenda.

The Blue Growth communication adopted in September 2012 is actually an update of the Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) strategy which had been presented some years before. It steps on the results of a study[8] published in the same year and reflects the needs of a changing economy in line with the objectives of the EU 2020 Strategy[9], calling for a sustainable growth and more jobs in the sectors of the maritime "blue" economy. Thus, Blue Growth is the maritime strand of the Strategy 2020. This strategy consists of 3 components:

1. **Targeted effort towards specific activities** (**focus areas**) identified as being the most promising sectors for growth development: Coastal tourism, aquaculture, blue energy, blue biotechnology, marine minerals mining. This does not mean that the more traditional blue sectors are neglected, but that in these areas more activities will be done.

2. **Cross-cutting tools** which are specific policy integrated measures across sectors: Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP), Marine Knowledge 2020 initiative[10] and maritime surveillance.

3. **Sea-basin strategies**

Other aspects that are crucial for a sustainable growth in the blue economy are the development of the appropriate skills, the marine and maritime research and the access to finance.

Ms PARIAT continued by outlining the blue growth **focus areas** or sectors in question:

Coastal and maritime tourism: It is probably the sector that offers most opportunities and, for the time being, also the largest one in terms of people employed and GDP share. With

[8] Blue Growth Study - Scenarios and drivers for Sustainable Growth from the Oceans, Seas and Coasts - https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/content/2946

[9] EUROPE 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Communication from the Commission, Brussels, 3.3.2010. COM(2010) 2020 final

[10] Green Paper: Marine Knowledge 2020 - from seabed mapping to ocean forecasting. COM(2012) 473 final

more than 2,36 million people employed, coastal and maritime tourism represent 1,1% of the total EU employment. About 51% of the bed capacities in hotels across Europe are concentrated in regions with a sea border, thus highly contributing to the economy of these regions.

The EC is about to adopt by mid February 2014 a Communication[11] targeted on the coastal and maritime tourism. The idea behind is that the strategy needs to be developed and prioritised in order to provide the EU with complementary tools to foster a smarter, more sustainable and inclusive coastal and maritime tourism in Europe. This will be achieved by identifying a series of recommendations and actions to be taken at EU level involving all stakeholders of the sector. It is a bottom-up initiative to be developed by the different communities involved in coastal and maritime tourism.

By way of clarification, Ms PARIAT explained that coastal tourism covers beach-based tourism and recreational activities as well as non-beach-related land-based tourism in the coastal area, e.g. swimming, surfing, sunbathing, etc. On the others side, maritime tourism covers tourism that is largely water-based rather than land-based but includes the operation of land-site facilities, manufacturing of equipment and services necessary for this segment, e.g. boating, yachting, cruising, nautical sports, etc.

Blue energy: This is another promising sector. A Communication[12] has been adopted in January 2014 that recognises the potential of ocean energy and outlines a plan of action that shall help the sector to develop and meet the long term needs.

The speaker clarified that blue or ocean energy refers mainly to electricity generated from wave and tidal power, but also includes other techniques such as salinity gradient or thermal energy conversion. It covers all technologies to harvest the renewable energy of the seas and oceans other than off-shore wind.

The Communication proposes to set up an Ocean Energy Forum where all players gather together around the table to join forces. It is a place where governments, industry, finance representatives and stakeholders of all kinds are able to meet and work together to discuss this strategic framework for the development of ocean energy sources, focusing on technological development, licencing arrangements, access to finance and also the environmental impact. By the end of 2016, this shall result in a strategic roadmap for the sector, setting out clear targets for the industrial development of the sector as well as a time frame for their achievement.

Marine aquaculture: This is also a very important segment for job creation in the EU, responsible for 80.000 jobs related to marine and maritime aquaculture. This sector can benefit from important financing under the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). For this purpose, the EC has produced strategic guidelines that are relevant for the different sea basins and, in particular, for the BS. On the basis of these guidelines, which present common priorities and general objectives at EU level, the EC and the EU MS will collaborate

[11] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A European Strategy for more Growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritime Tourism. Brussels, 20.2.2014. COM(2014) 86 final.

[12] Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Blue Energy – Action needed to deliver on the potential of ocean energy in European seas and oceans by 2020 and beyond. Brussels, 20.1.2014. COM(2014) 8 final.

to increase the sector's production and competitiveness. All MS are asked to set up multiannual plans to promote aquaculture in a sustainable way, which will provide the framework for the financial support through the EMFF. It aims at identifying a mix of measures, e.g. administrative simplification, spatial planning, market organisation, diversification, better labelling and information in order to have the market forces unlock the potential of the EU aquaculture sector.

The other targeted areas are more forward-looking and less developed areas than the previous ones. These are the so-called blue biotechnology and the sea-bed mining:

Blue technology (marine biotechnology) is a sector that is expected to grow due to the increasing demand for biotech products such as pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, food, feed and chemicals, biofuels and plastics. The current employment is relatively low, with a gross added value of about 0,8 billion euros but, being the demand for biotechnology products on the rise, the expected growth of the sector will offer high-skilled employment – especially if groundbreaking drugs can be developed from marine organisms – as well as significant down-stream opportunities.

Concerning **sea-bed mining**, a cutting-edge sector for the exploitation of marine mineral resources, a need for better understanding all its potential impacts has been identified. Between 2000 and 2010, this sector has seen an annual increase of about 15% in the price of many non-energy raw materials, mainly as a result of consumer demands in emerging economies. By 2020, 5% of the world's minerals, including cobalt, copper and zinc, could come from the ocean floors; this could rise up to 10% by 2030. The global annual turnover from marine mineral mining is expected to grow from virtually nothing up to 5 billion euros in the next 10 years and up to 10 billion euros by 2030.

DG MARE is commissioning a study and launching a public consultation on this subject. Furthermore, 2 EU founded research projects will cover this area in the next year; the results will help to develop further actions in this field. The speaker stressed that this is the preliminary phase of examining what is the real potential in this area.

Ms PARIAT continued by outlining the **cross-cutting tools** for achieving blue growth:

For **Maritime Spatial Planning / MSP**, the EC proposes a grant for the development of MSP in the BS for Bulgaria and Romania together in 2014. The call will be launched this year provided that the Work programme for 2014 is in place and adopted. More generally, the EC is also preparing a framework directive on MSP and integrated coastal management; the proposal[13] was adopted by the EC in march 2013, is currently being discussed by the European Parliament (EP) and the Council of Ministers and it is expected to be adopted in the coming months.

Concerning the **integrated maritime surveillance** the EC is working on developing a common information sharing environment, where maritime surveillance systems could be interconnected in order to exchange data in this field and provide more timely and complete maritime awareness pictures of the seas. This is an area where the BS can be further

[13] Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a framework for maritime spatial planning and integrated coastal management. Brussels, 12.3.2013. COM(2013) 133 final 2013/0074(COD)

involved, having already an important activity in terms of maritime surveillance and coastal guards' functions going on in this basin.

With regard to **marine knowledge**, the purpose is to improve the access to information about the sea and to develop a wider knowledge about it. This is based on an accumulation of data submitted on a voluntary basis on different aspects, e.g. on water quality, chemistry, biology, bathymetry, etc. These data are available free of charge on the EU platform called EMODNet[14]. The deliverables for the BS are an enhanced cooperation among stakeholders, primarily research institutes and academies and engineers, and the development of a basic digital map of the sea-bed of the BS by 2015 and on a high resolution by 2017.

Ms PARIAT then turned her attention to regional cooperation by observing that different initiatives have developed across Europe and even beyond Europe, involving all countries of a sea basin, and referred to the **strategies** and/or respective maritime action plans that have been elaborated for the Baltic, the Atlantic, the Adriatic and Ionian seas as well as the Arctic. In this regard, the speaker underlined that the strategies have been developed in order to ensure the most appropriate mix of measures to promote sustainable growth, taking into account local climate, oceanographic, economic, cultural and social factors. Besides, in the context of a study on the maritime clusters in the BS, a focus group meeting will be organised in Varna in close cooperation with proactive local stakeholders representing the various maritime angles with a view to developing maritime clusters.

Afterwards, Ms PARIAT presented the various funding opportunities for IMP for the programming period 2014 – 2020. Besides the EMFF, the speaker pointed also at the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI funds) that will all contribute to the Europe 2020 Strategy for growth and jobs. The different funds, for which specific measures are targeted in the various policy areas, can be activated under partnership contracts or agreements that the EC signs with all MS. These programmes are not only targeted to EU countries, but there also funding possibilities that can be activated by non-EU countries. For example, there is the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) which has mainly two dimensions, the cross-border and trans-national cooperation. During the past programming period, only the cross-border component was activated, however, it will be renewed during the period 2014 – 2020 so the speaker encouraged to make a better use of this fund.

On a wider scope, there is the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) which provides funding for countries neighbouring the EU, in particular, in the eastern side of Europe. This instrument supports the Black Sea Cross-Border Cooperation programmes which are open to Moldova, Ukraine, Russia and Georgia. Besides, there is an environmental cooperation in the framework of the Black Sea Synergy as well. Also other areas are funded by the ENI, such as the higher education programme and the support to the civil society, which were already promoted during the 2007 – 2013 period through the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and will continue to be funded also in the future.

Ms PARIAT also referred to Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, which, with a budget of 79 billion euros, is the largest funding programme in the world in this category. The programme is open for the rest of the world and is targeted at

[14] European Marine Observation and Data Network (http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/marine_knowledge_2020)

actions for cooperation with specific region including the BS. In fact, there is an open call for proposals, targeting the Black Sea region and amounting to EUR 1,5 million and all the Black Sea countries are strongly encouraged to apply.

Horizon 2020 will also provide support for cooperation in blue growth and marine and maritime research and innovation. Blue growth has been identified as a priority area for the period 2014 – 2015 under the focus of competitive low carbon energy, mobility for growth and waste. Thus, Horizon 2020 provides a lot of possibilities that can be activated.

Finally, the speaker reiterated that these funding possibilities are open for everyone at EU level and that the participation of all countries bordering the BS, including all active stakeholders, is desired in order to boost growth and jobs creation in the Black Sea.

PANEL 3: Promoting Cooperation on Fisheries Management as well as Sustainable Sea Food Production and Consumption

Moderation

Mr Fabrizio DONATELLA, Head of Unit, Conservation and Control in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), European Commission

Panelists

Mr Shalva AMIREJIBI, Ministry of Environment Protection, Georgia

Ms Oksana VIALOVA, Executive Director of Cluster "Products of the Sea", Sevastopol, Ukraine

Prof Bayram ÖZTÜRK, Faculty for Fisheries, University of Istanbul, Turkey

Mr Abdellah SROUR, Executive Secretary, General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)

Mr Fabrizio DONATELLA, Head of the Unit Conservation and Control in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea of DG MARE, started the third panel by highlighting the wide variety of speakers around the table and looking forward to an interactive debate, after which he introduced every member of the panel.

Speaker: Mr Shalva AMIREJIBI

Deputy Minister of Environment Protection and Natural Resources of Georgia

Deputy Minister **Shalva AMIREJIBI** took the floor by outlining the competencies of his Ministry, which is in charge of biodiversity and fisheries matters in the BS. As part of its tasks, it issues licences for fishing and deals with scientific matters like monitoring of the biodiversity of the BS coast of Georgia or performing stock assessments. In this regard, the speaker underlined that the consensus in issues like stock assessment is very important and that Georgia seeks for cooperation with other BS countries on a scientific level, but also on a managerial and institutional level. Mr AMIREJIBI remarked that Georgia is open for all kinds of cooperation in this field, which he deems very important, but at the same time he stressed that a proper platform is needed for that purpose which is accepted by all countries of the BS. The speaker looked forward to the discussions and asked to analyse the options and choose the most effective one that is acceptable for everybody.

Speaker: **Dr Oksana VIALOVA**

Executive Director of the Cluster “Products of the Sea”, Sevastopol, Ukraine

Title: New approaches to a sustainable development of fishery, aquaculture and scientific researches

After this contribution, the moderator gave the floor to **Dr Oksana VIALOVA**, Executive Director of the Cluster “Products of the Sea” of Sevastopol, Ukraine, who started by saying that she represents the business environment for fisheries and aquaculture in Ukraine.

Ms VIALOVA presented some figures on the structure and size of the fisheries and aquaculture sector in the country in order to show the importance of these segments in the BS. Ukraine has never had any fishing activity in the ocean but only in internal waters and seas. In this regard, the speaker underlined on the importance of analysing how to increase the fish stocks in the BS. Furthermore, she focused on the consumption of fish and explained that there has been a decline in the consumption per capita in the last years. There might be a possible connection to the Ukrainian food security level but also to the situation of the wild stocks. Looking at the balance of imports and exports for fish and seafood, 80 to 90% of the products come from imports.

Ms VIALOVA focused on Crimea, a large peninsula in the south of Ukraine of about 1.600 km coastline, which is a quite good region for the culture of different seafood species in the coastal area. There are not only good climatic and hydrological conditions, but also good professionals and innovative technologies are available as well as good biological research institutes (e.g. the Institute of Biology of the Southern Seas NASU). Among others, technologies for seafood processing e.g. of mussels, algae, etc. and for the creation of pharmaceuticals and cosmetics are available. According to the speaker, the requirements for the development of aquaculture are thus given in Ukraine. Apart from this, there is also the possibility to train professionals who want to put in place marine farms or get involved in aquaculture.

The cluster “Products of the Sea” was created in 2010 and is formed by partners from the authorities, the business and the science sectors. The cluster is trying to unify the researches, but primarily an exchange of information is needed so that the science can put technologies into production. The industry is always seeking to improve these technologies and therefore it needs science.

The cluster “Products of the Sea” is trying to show the main directions of a sustainable and integrated development of fishery and aquaculture in the BS region. In this context, investments and financial support from the EU will be necessary in order to enhance cooperation in fisheries research and transfer of technology and innovation among BS countries. Apart from this, Ms VIALOVA outlined the various areas where the cluster is active, among others, in research for new aquaculture species, environmental security concerning farming sites and establishment of special areas for aquaculture, training,

tourism, biotechnologies and development of new technologies for the production of marine biofuels as well.

Finally, Ms VIALOVA referred to the research vessels and particularly to the ship “Professor Vodyanitskiy” acquired in 2010 for scientific purposes in the BS.

Speaker: **Prof Bayram ÖZTÜRK**

Faculty for Fisheries, University of Istanbul, Turkey / Head of the Turkish Marine Research Foundation

Title: IUU Fishing and Some Proposals for the Black Sea

Prof Bayram ÖZTÜRK focused his presentation on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing activities. He described IUU fishing as the single major obstacle to fisheries regulation, while “illegal” means in contravention of a legal regime, “unreported” refers either to not reported or mis-reported and “unregulated” means that is performed by vessels without a nationality or flying a flag of convenience. Numerous international organisations are dealing with IUU issues, among others the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) but also the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Interpol, the EU and Regional Fishery Bodies (RFBs).

In the Mediterranean, including the Black Sea, half of the stocks are depleted[15], for Turkish waters 6 species are endangered and in most of the area of the BS undersized fish are caught.

A workshop on IUU issues was organised last year with the help of the BSC and GFCM with the objective of better understanding how the BS is developing in terms of IUU, ways to tackle this problem and how to put in place the concept of zero tolerance for illegal activities in the BS. Furthermore, in order to achieve sustainable fisheries, ways to regulate fisheries in the BS according to the different stakeholders, i.e. according to national, EU or other rules, but mainly GFCM, were discussed.

IUU fishing is reported for all BS countries for 15 species, starting from anchovy to baby clams, whereas turbot is the most important target fish. The speaker observed that the stocks of this species have been depleted dramatically, however, a stock enhancement project has been set up for this fish.

Prof ÖZTÜRK then turned his attention to the fishing fleet of the BS countries, focusing mainly on the Turkish vessels. Being a very competitive fleet and with a strong history, the Turkish fleet catches approximately 200.000 tonnes of fish by year, which the speaker describes as a heavy fishing pressure.

[15] FAO Review of the state of world marine fishery resources. FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture Technical Paper No. 569. Rome, FAO. 2011. 334 pp. (P. Barros)

Focusing on bycatch as a result of IUU fishing – be it with active or ghost nets – the main species caught are cetaceans: harbour porpoises, bottlenose dolphins and sometimes even common dolphins. Also sharks, which are highly commercial species, constitute an important part of IUU bycatch.

The speaker referred to the efforts done so far to tackle this problem by the 6 countries of the BS, which are meeting every year and trying to cooperate in order to minimise the illegal fishing activities. However, heavy dangerous and illegal activities do unfortunately still happen in the basin. As main social reasons, Prof ÖZTÜRK cited the lack of transparency in catches and landings, high economic profits, political uncertainties and conflicts in some areas, lack of environmental consciousness, weak NGO involvement and low salaries of fishermen. Besides, there are also technical reasons as the weak implementation of the AIS (Automatic Identification Systems) regulation[16], a weak Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) system, weak capacity and low number of patrol boats and unexperienced staff. Thus, also capacity building in needed to solve the problem.

Prof ÖZTÜRK presented the various key players and observed that GFCM is ranked first followed by the EU due to the fact that the latter represents less than 20% of the coastline of the BS while GFCM represents more than 45%. However, he emphasised the need for cooperation among all organisations and stakeholders in this issue. After this, the speaker proposed a road map for the mitigation of IUU fishing in the BS basin outlining various aspects to be considered. First of all, a clear and transparent information system is needed as well as standardisation for fishing gears. Besides, turbot stocks should be clearly assessed with a solid methodology.
Also sturgeon poaching, which has become common in some areas, should be stopped, so all necessary precautions should be taken for that scope. Moreover, the MCS system should be developed to reduce illegal activities.

A relevant role is played by fisheries associations and cooperatives as well, which should do more for the mitigation of and the zero tolerance against IUU activities among their own member fishermen. Besides, the current weak implementation of national rules, laws and regulations for fishing should be tackled.

The speaker also pointed at the scientific work and stressed the importance of having studies on IUU fishing as well as on the lack of records on bycatch and ghost fishing. He also underlined the need for coordination among states and particularly for concerted actions in the BS. Furthermore, an estimation of the revenues generated by IUU products together with the analysis of social and economic impacts of IUU fishing would be of high relevance.

With regard to GFCM, Prof ÖZTÜRK highlighted the importance of monitoring IUU fishing in the region and of establishing a list of vessels presumably carrying out IUU activities particularly for the BS. He also welcomed the recommendation issued on Turbot stocks for the BS[17] and proposed the creation of a GFCM permanent working group for IUU fishing. The speaker also underlined the importance of outreach work, dissemination and public

[16] International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), Chapter V, Regulation 19.2 - Carriage requirements for shipborne navigational systems and equipment

[17] Rec. GFCM/37/2013/2 on the establishment of a set of minimum standards for bottom-set gillnet fisheries for turbot and conservation of cetaceans in the Black Sea.

awareness on IUU issues with regard to fishermen and other stakeholders and outlined the materials (posters, brochures, videos) prepared for that purpose in the various languages.

Afterwards, the speaker referred to existing regulations on IUU matters at EU[18] and GFCM[19] level and asked the EU, Turkey and all other stakeholders to help and promote GFCM membership, having in the BS 3 riparian states, Ukraine, Russia and Georgia, that are not members of GFCM. However, he saluted that the Russian Federation had recently become member of the Mediterranean Science Commission (CIESM).

Finally, Prof ÖZTÜRK presented the tagging programme that has been recently launched by the Turkish Marine Research Foundation (TUDAV) for bonito from the Mediterranean to the BS and described this as an important action having this shared stock been depleted to a large extent.

Speaker: **Mr Abdellah SROUR**

Executive Secretary, General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)

Title: The GFCM and the Black Sea

Mr Abdellah SROUR, took the floor as last speaker of the panel and focused his presentation on the GFCM' activities and achievements.

GFCM was founded in 1949 according to the provisions of Article XIV of the FAO constitution and has been endowed with the competence on the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and connecting waters. It is formed by 24 members, three of them, Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey are BS riparian states, 19 Mediterranean countries plus Japan and the EU and has an open membership.
GFCM disposes of an autonomous budget and has also the power to adopt recommendations which are binding on members.

There have been three amendments of the GFCM agreement so far. In this regard, Mr SROUR highlighted the amendment of 1997 which allowed the Council to be transformed in a Commission and to establish a Secretariat as well as an autonomous budget. He also mentioned that, presently, a further amendment is being finalised which has the aim to modernise the organisation, to face the new generation of challenges and, in particular, to promote the sub-regional work of the organisation as well as the inter-institutional cooperation and to enhance compliance and decision making. Concerning the sub-regional

[18] Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 of 29 September 2008 establishing a Community system to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, amending Regulations (EEC) No 2847/93, (EC) No 1936/2001 and (EC) No 601/2004 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 1093/94 and (EC) No 1447/1999.

[19] Rec. GFCM/2006/4 on the establishment of a list of vessels presumed to have carried out illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities in the GFCM area.

approach, GFCM has set up a specific ad-hoc working group for the BS in order to start consolidating this direction.

Afterwards, Mr SROUR presented the GFCM organigram and explained that the Commission, as supreme body, is constituted by the authorities of its 24 members who meet once a year. The Commission is steered by a Bureau, while the Secretariat aims at managing the activities and the policy of the organisation. The functioning of GFCM is organised in order to face the multidisciplinarity of work. In this sense, four technical committees have been established:

The Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) works mainly on fisheries issues and has the purpose of producing technical elements and advice for fisheries management. Furthermore, SAC is organised in thematic sub-groups dealing with stock assessment, statistics and information, economics and social sciences and marine environment and ecosystems. The Committee on Aquaculture (CAQ) is formed by thematic sub-groups as well which cover the areas of marketing, sustainability, site selection and carrying capacity and information systems (in form of a database). Besides, there are also two transversal working groups: One is the *Ad hoc* Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS) which was established 2 years ago and constitutes a bridge between SAC and CAQ, being in charge of the activities carried out in the BS. The other is the GFCM/ICCAT Working Group on Large Pelagic Species in the Mediterranean. Apart from this, there is the Compliance Committee (CoC), in charge of the enforcement and implementation of rules and recommendations, as well as the Committee on Administration and Finance (CAF).

Mr SROUR highlighted the active cooperation existing with the FAO Regional Projects as well as with other international organisations like the BSC, Eurofish, Accobams[20] or UnepMAP[21] with regard to the Barcelona Convention.

GFCM shares the overarching goals of FAO with regard to food security and poverty alleviation. Within this frame, the Commission promotes scientific research on fisheries, ecosystems, habitats and aquaculture, supports management and decision making through the collection and maintenance of data and underpins MCS efforts to fight against IUU activities. Moreover, it offers a common platform for institutions, stakeholders and the civil society and is also responsible for adopting recommendation with regard to management plans, control of fishing effort and capacity and reduction of bycatch among others. In this context the speaker highlighted the management plan that is being prepared for turbot in the BS following the recommendation[22] issued last year. The speaker also referred to the various meetings that are being organised on stock assessment in the BS in addition to those held the WGBS and remarked that these meetings are open to members and non-members as well as for all concerned experts.

Finally, focusing on cooperation in fisheries and aquaculture in the BS, Mr SROUR observed that there is a fragmented legal framework in the six riparian states and suggested that a more consolidated institutional cooperation would be needed. He also noted that the situation

[20] Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans in the Black Sea Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area

[21] United Nations Environment Programme – Mediterranean Action Plan for the Barcelona Convention

[22] Rec. GFCM/37/2013/2 on the establishment of a set of minimum standards for bottom-set gillnet fisheries for turbot and conservation of cetaceans in the Black Sea.

in the BS is complicated since the 1990s due to a habitat deterioration, the overexploitation of stocks and also illegal activities. In this sense, the BS Synergy constitutes an opportunity to revert this trend.

By way of conclusion, the moderator, **Mr DONATELLA**, took the floor and emphasised the need for integration of the different activities and initiatives that are taking place at national, regional and sub-regional level. In this respect, he highlighted the importance of finding the correct platform in order to be able to enhance cooperation. He also referred to aquaculture as well as to IUU fishing, which should be further taken into consideration, and underlined that this event is the cornerstone of the next actions to be taken in the BS. Besides, the moderator mentioned also GFCM as a tool and a platform for this strategy and brought up the question whether there are also other platforms that could be used.

Finally, Mr DONATELLA closed the panel by saying that this had been only the start of the discussions and looked forward to go more into details and practical elements for cooperation in a next step.

PANEL 4: Preserving the Marine Environment of the Black Sea

Moderation

Ms Carmen FALKENBERG-AMBROSIO, Head of Section, Regional Programmes Neighbourhood East, DG Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid, European Commission

Ms FALKENBERG-AMBROSIO welcomed back the participants and introduced the panalists

Panelists

Prof Marusya LUYBCHEVA, S&D, Member of the European Parliament, Bulgaria

Mr Nicola DI PIETRANTONIO, Project Manager, Regional Programmes Neighbourhood East Mediterranean and Black Sea, DG Development and Cooperation - EuropeAid, European Commission

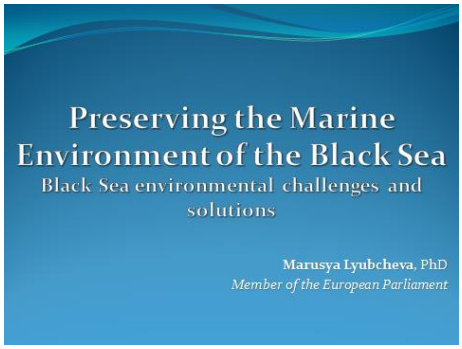
Mr Andrzej JANUSZEWSKI, Desk Officer for Ukraine and Central Asia, International, Regional & Bilateral Relations, DG Environment, European Commission

Mr Gheorghe CONSTANTIN, Ministry of the Environment, Department of Water, Forests und Fishery, Romania, and Black Sea Commission Country Representative

Speaker: **Prof Marusya LUYBCHEVA**

S&D, Member of the European Parliament, Bulgaria

Title: Preserving the Marine Environment of the Black Sea. Black Sea environmental challenges and solutions



Prof Marusya LUYBCHEVA started by pointing out that, on policy making level, today there is a variety of diverse activities that cause a variety of interlinked problems in different areas. These different areas are not enough integrated with a unified framework for environmental interventions. That needs to be changed.

Environmental interventions should be based on identifying needs and problems, and on identifying capacities and development potentials of the whole BS region.

Environmental policy making for the BS is diversified between national measures and international convention, measures on regional level and civil society activities, with different priorities. At present, these measures lack a common strategic approach.

As a result, we have a huge number of project which are dealing with problems of the BS environment (this is the good news), but which are uncoordinated, partial, non-systematic and split up by regions.

Nevertheless, as Prof LUYBCHEVA pointed out, there are good projects with very good results, e.g. those dealing with monitoring. Monitoring is very important, as it allows to identify the problems, the reasons behind them and the stakeholders which can be involved in solving the problems.

Environmental projects should be based on the prioritisation of targets and should be implemented under the framework of cohesion, integration, coordination and unification of efforts. Therefore, supporting preparatory actions of the EU Commission and using EU's experience is of high importance. Projects for the greening of the BS should be initiated and environmental targets for the period until 2020 should be developed.

Prof LUYBCHEVA also emphasised the need for establishing a BS risk assessment centre as a concrete project.

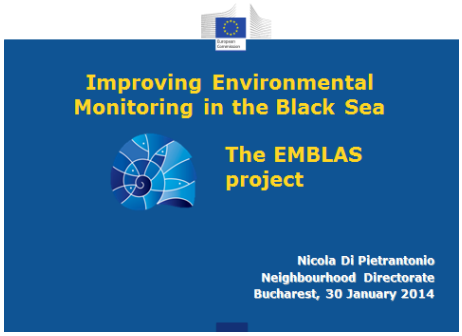
She closed by stating that all expect good results for the BS region, for the environment and for the economy. But if one wants to make use of the programmes of the EU and create blue growth, one has to think about the green industry and about the coordination, integration and involvement of all BS countries in all programmes.

Ms Carmen FALKENBERG-AMBROSIO (Chair) thanked Prof LUYBCHEVA for the overview. She mentioned that the BS is one of the most vulnerable regional seas of the world. Nutrient enrichment, pollution, loss of biodiversity, and coastal degradation have been identified as the major issues affecting the environmental state of the BS. All these problems are interlinked, and one reason is poorly coordinated coastal development.

Speaker: **Mr Nicola DI PIETRANTONIO**

Project Manager, Regional Programmes Neighbourhood East Mediterranean and Black Sea, DG Development and Cooperation - EuropeAid, European Commission

Title: Improving Environmental Monitoring in the Black Sea: The EMBLAS project



Mr Nicola DI PIETRANTONIO started by pointing at the institutional weaknesses which limit the efficiency and efficacy of monitoring pollution in the BS. As a result of such weaknesses, recent attempts to develop national programmes of water monitoring along the lines of Water Framework Directive (WFD), Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) or Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) requirements have not been achieving the expected results.

Particular problems in this context are:

- a limited use of the data which are collected through marine monitoring for policy making, which are related to a limited link between research and policy making
- a lack of full coordination between countries
- national legislations sometimes lack provisions on contents and implementing of monitoring, including a definition of responsibilities
- quality assurance and quality control requirements are often not fully defined
- a poor quality of monitoring data
- a lack of harmonised terminology
- the biological component (besides the physical and the chemical components), i.e. the assessment of living resources, is sometimes neglected in monitoring programmes. One reason is the costs of such operations: monitoring vessels etc. are expensive.
- monitoring of the open seas is often neglected as compared to coastal waters.

These are the reasons for the existence of the project EMBLAS (Improving Environmental Monitoring in the Black Sea).

Overall Objective of the project is to set up initiatives that will help to improve the protection of the Black Sea environment. The project focuses on the two specific objectives:

- to improve partner countries' ability to perform marine environmental monitoring along the MSFD principles
- to improve availability and quality of data.

Basic facts:

- Two phases: a preparatory phase (2013-14) + large scale project (2014-2017)
- Budget: EUR 3.7 million (EU contribution = EUR 3.1 million)
- Beneficiary countries: Georgia, Russian Federation, Ukraine
- Implementing partners: UNDP-led consortium with 14 organisations
- Partnership approach with all relevant stakeholders.

Expected outcomes are:

1. Increased capacities of the relevant national authorities to carry out marine environmental monitoring in the Black Sea along MSFD principles
2. Quality assurance and control procedures in laboratories systematically implemented
3. BS Water Quality Database (BSIS) further developed and data products in support of informed decision-making in Black Sea environmental protection provided
4. Public awareness about the need of high quality marine environmental data increased.

During the present preparatory phase, there are two core activities:

1. reviewing what is in the countries
2. assessment of needs of laboratories (equipment, procedures, training, etc.)

Planned activities for the rest of the project time until 2017 are:

- Development and implementation of cost-effective and harmonised programmes for marine environmental monitoring in accordance with reporting obligations under multilateral environmental agreements and MSFD
- Elaboration and implementation of training programmes
- Preparation of a methodology and implementation of joint field surveys (with staff from the three countries on one vessel, jointly applying methodologies and standards)
- Develop and operate the web-based Black Sea Water Quality Database
- Dissemination of knowledge and best practices, public awareness and visibility of the project.

Speaker: **Mr Andrzej JANUSZEWSKI**

Desk Officer for Ukraine and Central Asia, International, Regional & Bilateral Relations, DG Environment, European Commission

Title: **M**arine Strategy Framework Directive Guiding **I**mprovements in the Black **S**ea **I**ntegrated Monitoring **S**ystem (MISIS)

Mr Andrzej JANUSZEWSKI introduced a complementary project, but with different participating countries, called **M**arine Strategy Framework Directive Guiding **I**mprovements in the Black **S**ea **I**ntegrated Monitoring **S**ystem (MISIS).

Participating countries in MISIS are Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey, so that EMBLAS and MISIS together cover the whole Black Sea. Both projects are collaborating.

The project is coordinated by the National Institute for Marine Research and Development “Grigore Antipa”, Constanţa, Romania and involves various institutions from the participating countries. It started in March 2012 with a two year phase (plus 4 month extension).

Overall goal is to support efforts to protect and restore the environmental quality and sustainability of the Black Sea. Specific objectives are:

- To improve availability and quality of chemical and biological data to provide for integrated assessments of the Black Sea state of environment, including pressures and impacts (in line with Annex I and III of the MSFD) ;
- To increase number and size of protected areas in the Black Sea as well as to increase their degree of protection;
- To enhance stakeholders participation and public awareness on environmental issues.

Achievements of MISIS to date include:

- a number of reports, in particular, a “Black Sea Diagnostic Report II (RO, BG, TR)” on the national monitoring programmes of the participating countries, including gap and needs analysis.
- draft revised national and regional monitoring programmes;
- various technical reports, including a draft report on the state of BS transitional, coastal and marine waters taking into account MSFD requirements, an inventory of national databases, and a report on marine protected areas.

Details can be found on the website http://www.misisproject.eu.

Ms Carmen FALKENBERG-AMBROSIO (Chair) invites the participants to reflect the following three questions, with a view to the two projects just presented and beyond:

1. How would you ensure sustainability of monitoring that has been created and set up?
2. How do you think stakeholders can be involved in the future monitoring activities?
3. What about equitable access to data and involvement of NGOs, citizens, fishermen etc.? How can the data be used to improve the economy of the BS region as a whole?

Speaker: Mr Gheorghe CONSTANTIN

Ministry of the Environment, Department of Water, Forests und Fishery, Romania, and Black Sea Commission Country Representative

Mr Gheorghe CONSTANTIN started his contribution by stating that when debating blue growth, environment should be number one, as without protecting the environment, we will not have fishing or tourism. All activities should take care of the environment.

The speaker pointed out that from the institutional perspective, the fact that they have a convention on the protection of the BS and a commission is very positive, but that poor staffing of the Commission’s secretariat is a problem.

With reference to a statement of Commissioner Damanaki in the morning session, he emphasised that Romania supports an amendment of the BS Convention in order to allow the EU to become a member. He thinks that the involvement of the EU and the support of the EU will increase as a consequence of formal membership. Discussions on a respective amendment of the convention are in process.

The Romanian side wants to promote a Black Sea survey. The country considers it important to have such an initiative on the BS, in the form of a joint expedition, to have a snapshot in particular on the living resources.

For the EU member states, it is important to implement the MSFD in the BS. Together with their partners in the BS Commission, they try to have a common background and common objectives for the protection of the marine environment.

Mr Constantin mentioned problems such as overfishing and invasive species and called for measures against these problems. He also recalled the fact that the BS is affected from land-based sources, which result in a need to improve regional cooperation, including the hinterland countries.

The BS Commission has prepared a legally binding document on fishery, which unfortunately is not yet implemented. In this context, Mr Constantine emphasised the importance of cooperation between the BS Commission and GFCM. GFCM in his view should have a role in implementing MSFD in the BS.

In conclusion, Mr Constantine emphasised the beneficial role of the EU in the region and Romania's support for the development of the maritime policy.

Referring to the questions asked by the Chairperson, he explained:

- Sustainability: after the MISIS project will be finalised, they will continue the activity with national resources. However, for the MSFD methodology, they need sufficient capacity
- Concerning stakeholders, these are involved in some parts of monitoring.
- Romania intends to elaborate a framework for the access to the data generated. As these are public data, they should be available to all interested stakeholders.

Question and Answer session:

Ms Carmen FALKENBERG-AMBROSIO (Chair) pointed out that EU supports BS countries, but that these countries are in the "driver's seat" and must act themselves. Only this ensures sustainability. Against this background, she invited comments from the participants to her three guiding questions.

Mr Abdellah SROUR, Executive Secretary, General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) confirmed that GFCM has an active cooperation with the BSC.

With regard to things that should be done, he mentioned an example form the aquaculture sector. GFCM has just finalised the process of establishing a multi-stakeholder platform, to interact and exchange views about the most relevant issues, such as 1) legal aspect, 2) aspects of marketing, 3) technologies and innovation in aquaculture and 4) aspects related to the environment and traceability.

Another participant referred to the issue of alien species. He endorsed the enforcement of the ballast water convention, but felt that this could not be the only solution, in view of the fact that there are already species from the Red Sea in the BS. He warned that we should be careful with the intentional introduction of foreign species for aquaculture, such as the pacific oyster (*Crassostrea gigas*). For a sustainable development of aquaculture, we should rather take native species into consideration.

Dr Adrian STANICA, Scientific Director of Romanian Institute for Marine Geology and Geoecology (GeoEcoMar) stressed three things in the context of conservation and monitoring of the BS environment:

- In order to preserve something, we need to know what is here; but we are still lacking a lot of knowledge about the BS.
- Water quality and biota are absolutely important issues, but we also have to look at oceanography, dynamics of sediments etc.
- A few months ago, an early warning system for the coasts of Romania and Bulgaria became operational. This was a European initiative, created by a cross-border project funded by the EU Commission via structural funds. The system is looking in real time at the coastal security, which is also a very important issue. It is important to integrate such systems into and make them compatible with larger European systems.
- Such efforts have been started already, but should be enlarged to cover the whole BS.

Dr Oksana VIALOVA, Executive Director of Cluster "Products of the Sea", Sevastopol, Ukraine, pointed out that they have a research vessel and a history of investigation and monitoring. She invited Ukrainian scientists to take part in such activities and mentioned that they have data from monitoring, which can be made available to other users.

Concerning aquaculture, she explained that some marine fish farmers introduced new species. Being the BS one sea for all six riparian countries, common solutions should be found for marine and freshwater aquaculture. She also mentioned that some alien species, e.g. mussel species, may be used for farming.

Mr Nicola DI PIETRANTONIO offered to share with Dr Vialova the list of Ukrainian institutions that are involved in monitoring and the EMBLAS project, in order to establish contacts.

He welcomed the willingness of her institution to share data and explained that fragmentation of data and information is a real problem. Many institutions around the BS have data on their computers, but do not share them.

It is difficult today to go with a research vessel to different national waters. It could be easier to undertake separate monitoring in territorial waters, but in order to do so, we need to speak a common language in monitoring, which means compatible methodologies. If not common standards, we at last need common principles, which should be integrated in national legislation. But legislation is outside of the scope of his project.

In many countries, monitoring is not carried out on a regular basis. To make it more sustainable, adequate financing is needed. At the moment, the state has the monopoly for monitoring, maybe private capital can be brought on board to increase the sustainability of monitoring.

Prof Marusya LUYBCHEVA emphasised that it is very important to bring together all BS countries in monitoring. There are six littoral countries and ten countries in the wider BS region. Regardless where a problem appears, it has impacts on the whole BS and all BS countries.

She knows from a project on environmental monitoring in the BS how difficult it was to prepare common methods and to agree them between all countries. But this is needed, because the BS is a very sensitive sea. As a consequence, it is also very important to have a common **centre for the assessment of risks.**

Dr Oksana VIALOVA raised the issue of the Sea of Azov. She explained that there are the same problems, that the area is huge and suffers from significant pollution. She advocated to keep also this area in mind.

Ms Carmen FALKENBERG-AMBROSIO (Chair) in conclusion of the session mentioned three main issues:

- There is a call for coordination of all the various efforts at various levels
- We would need a common methodology to look at monitoring, both in the sense of what exists now and where we would like to go
- Data-sharing and how it could be consistent and coherent with all the various things that are happening at various levels.

She concluded by saying that this was a first discussion only and that she is sure there will be more in the future.

PANEL 5: Fostering the Black Sea Economy through Cross-border Projects and Maritime Clusters

Moderation

Ms Beate GMINDER, Head of Unit, Maritime Policy in Mediterranean and Black Sea, DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), European Commission

Panelists

Mr Liviu OBOROC, Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Regional Development and Constructions of the Republic of Moldova and focal point for the Danube Strategy

Ms Iulia HERTZOG, Director of the Managing Authority of the ENPI CBC Black Sea in the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, Romania

Mr Vsevolod CHENTSOV, Director, Directorate General for the European Union, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine

Mr David JAVAKHADZE, Acting Deputy Head of the Transport Policy Department, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia

Ms Tanya DIMITROVA, Policy officer, EU Neighbourhood, Middle East, Black Sea region, DG Research and Innovation, European Commission

Mr Marciel BUSTINDUY NAVAS, Sustainable Transport Specialist, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

Mr Damien PÉRISSÉ, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR), Belgium

Mr Nicholaos EMIRZAS, BSEC PERMIS Turkey

Ms Beate GMINDER (Chair), Head of the Unit Maritime Policy in Mediterranean and Black Sea of DG MARE, European Commission, opened the last panel by pointing out that the session would be about putting in practice the theme of blue growth and about coming up with ideas on how to cooperate on blue economy in the BS region. In this regard, Ms Gminder asked the panelists to present concrete projects on how to cooperate and create networks, as well as to focus on how their organisations are contributing to the blue economy. She also invited to discuss what aspects could be improved but also what projects and initiatives are working well and could be used as an example for cooperation in other sectors. Besides, she posed the question how EU institutions, e.g. through the Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP), as well as national and regional administrations can support the efforts of stakeholders.

Speaker: Mr Liviu OBOROC

Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Regional Development and Constructions of the Republic of Moldova and focal point for the EU Strategy for the Danube Region

Deputy Minister **Liviu OBOROC** remarked that, through this event, the necessary framework is given to share opinions and to create synergies and partnerships in the region. Mr OBOROC highlighted importance of the region and its potential in terms of natural and also energy resources.

The transport cooperation programmes were among the first European programmes for which the Republic of Moldova was recipient for EU financing. Also the Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme 2007–2013 has constituted a good framework for creating mutual confidence between participating countries, contributing to the development of cooperation and preparing the road for the viable commitment to ambitious projects to align European standards. The promotion of projects of common interest for participating countries is intended to strengthen the identity of the region of the BS.

In the future programming period, Moldova will continue to be committed, also in the light of the achievements made during the previous period. Moldova in fact ranked third, after Romania and Bulgaria, in terms of assimilation of funds. The programme has also substantially motivated a dynamic cooperation within the regions and, in the past years, Moldova has been an active participant in the regional cooperation processes in Central and Southeast Europe as well as in the BS region, e.g. through the Eastern Partnership.

Mr OBOROC emphasised that regional cooperation is a priority in Moldova's foreign policy and the country's active involvement in these processes is directed towards achieving the general goal of integration in the EU. The projects and results already achieved show the political will of Moldova to move onto a new stage of cooperation. The involvement of European institutions and mechanisms is of major importance and constitutes a crucial opportunity for making out of the BS area a region of democracy, stability and prosperity.

After this, **Ms GMINDER (Chair)** thanked the speaker for this good overview and asked him whether he could cite any concrete experience from the Danube Strategy. Mr OBOROC replied that the Danube Strategy is a useful platform for the participating countries of the region. At a macro-regional level, the strategy follows the same objectives, thus economic growth, environmental protection, improved education, security, etc. The speaker highlighted that defining priorities where to take action and how to get more benefits from the regional cooperation are among the most important aspects of the strategy.

Speaker:	**Ms Iulia HERTZOG** Director of the Managing Authority of the ENPI CBC Black Sea in the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, Romania
Title:	Cross-border cooperation in the Black Sea Basin

Ms Iulia HERTZOG described the cross-border cooperation (CBC) initiative as a pilot programme that is being financed by the EC through the European Neighbourhood & Partnership Instrument (ENPI). During the period 2007–2013, the programme was integrated by 8 participating countries: 3 EU member states (MS) (Bulgaria, Greece and Romania), 4 partner countries (Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) and 1 candidate country (Turkey). Moreover, the Russian Federation and Azerbaijan are eligible to participate in the programme with own funds. The overall objective is to contribute to "a stronger and sustainable economic and social development of the regions of the Black Sea Basin"[23] and the total budget provided was 35 million Euros, out of which 28 million came from the ENPI fund and 7 million Euros from the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) for Turkey. The speaker described as a step forward the fact that in the next programming period there will be only one single budget which, from the point of view of the beneficiaries, will be easier to manage.

Two calls for proposals have been issued so far within the framework of the programme, for which 368 proposals were submitted requesting more than 180 million Euros. Out of these proposals, 62 projects were finally contracted with a total value of more than 33 million Euros.

The programme is divided into 3 priorities. Under priority 1, which has the objective of supporting the economic and social development of the cross-border partnership, 26 projects have been performed. The activities covered by these projects include among others the promotion of traditional agricultural products from the BS, the development of cooperation networks for the promotion of information and communication technologies, the support of transit transportation infrastructures or the creation of networks for the promotion of innovative urban and rural planning as well as for capacity building among administrations.

Under priority 2, which is dedicated to the environmental protection and conservation, 24 projects have been selected. These aim at establishing networks for the development of methodologies and capabilities to respond to oil spills as well as of contingency plans, implementing scientific studies in the fields of monitoring, control and protection of the maritime system and of the rivers, creating databases for natural protected areas of the BS basin or establishing partnerships for innovation in waste management, among others.

Ms HERTZOG paid particular attention to priority 3, related to cultural networking and educational exchange, under which 12 projects have been selected. The activities covered

[23] http://www.blacksea-cbc.net/

by them rank from the promotion of cultural heritage values and the establishment of networks of cultural institutions or centres to the promotion of students' exchange, the creation of partnerships among universities, high schools and research centres and others.

Looking at the future, the speaker observed that the geographical coverage of the new European Neighbourhood Instrument – Cross-Border Cooperation (ENI CBC) Black Sea Basin Programme will be identical with the previous one. According to the Draft CBC Strategy, the strategic development will be aligned with the 3 objectives of promoting economic and social development in the regions, addressing common challenges in the areas of environment, public health and safety and security and supporting better conditions for ensuring the mobility of persons, goods and capital.

Concerning the ongoing discussions on the new strategy and its thematic objectives (TO), Ms HERTZOG noted that proposals have been made on the promotion of the social inclusion and the fight against poverty, on environmental protection and climate change adaptation and on the accessibility to the regions and development of transport and communication networks. These objectives are currently under public consultation.

The speaker also mentioned that Romania has prepared the Partnership Agreement based on which the country can apply for the funds of the EU. According to this, the development of the maritime potential, marine knowledge, the protection of the marine environment, maritime spatial planning and integrated maritime surveillance may also be addressed for joint actions.

In line with the Regulation[24], only 4 thematic objectives are to be selected so, according to the speaker, it is important to have a very good strategy and to correlate well with the other programmes in order to avoid overlapping and to ensure the coherence with other initiatives. Besides the proposed TO, also possible alternative TOs have been defined such as business and SME development, education, research, technology and innovation, local culture and historical heritage, support to local & regional good governance and common challenges in safety and security.

The programme's budget is not known yet, but having Romania proposed that the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is transferred to the external cooperation programmes (IPA/ENI), a provisional budget is anticipated for the beginning of 2014. For the next period, the programme is expected to be more efficient and with a major focus on objectives and indicators in order to maximise the impact in the region and to obtain concrete results.

From the beneficiaries, more relevant and result-oriented proposals are needed as well as high quality actions. To have a clear objective and an added value as well as visible and realistic results are very important aspects too, since the resources are very small and the budget is not expected to increase. Also a strong partnership among beneficiaries is of high relevance, thus to have a committed and effective team of partners eager to achieve the objectives and with operational and technical capacity. Moreover, an accurate planning of the activities as well as an effective management and a good communication are essential.

[24] Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal. Brussels, 6.10.2011. COM(2011) 611 final

Ms HERTZOG continued by describing the actions completed until now, which are, among others, the setting up of a Joint Programming Committee (JPC), the appointment of the Managing Authority and Audit Authority, the drafting of the socio-economic analysis and SWOT as well as the launch of the stakeholders consultations. Next steps include further public consultations, the submission of the Joint Operational Programme (JOP) to the EC until the end of 2014 and finally, after the negotiations and approval of the JOP, the signature of the Financing Agreement.

Speaker: Mr Vsevolod CHENTSOV

Director of the Directorate-General for the European Union in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

After this presentation, Ms Gminder gave the floor to **Mr Vsevolod CHENTSOV**, who started his speech by referring to the Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) programmes and the gradual creation of a broader free trade and economic zone. Concerning the Eastern Partnership countries, three of them just finalised their draft association agreements. Besides, also the Russian Federation is gearing up for a new deal with the EU with an ambitious part on trade, in view of achieving a free trade zone in the future.

This new environment creates also new opportunities for cross-border cooperation, while previously, due to political differences among states, it was not possible to push forward common projects. The speaker expressed the hope that now those difficulties will be overcome and that, gradually, the tariff and non-tariff barriers in the region will be reduced in order to facilitate trade and transportation links and improve the cultural and social context. Thus, now that better conditions for cross-border and regional cooperation are given, there is the necessity to capitalise on them.

With regard to the previous CBC programmes, Mr Chentsov observed that there is the need to achieve better synergies between the national programmes and the bilateral, trilateral and Cross-Border Cooperation programmes in order to avoid duplications and better use the available resources. He also mentioned that Ukraine, being a large country with about 40% of the BS shoreline, would also be able to absorb a higher percentage of the budget available, so he expressed the hope that the threshold would be gradually adjusted. However, the main point still resides in the quality of the projects proposed.

Mr Chentsov continued by saying that, for the time being, the financial resources allocated are very limited, so there is the necessity to utilise them in a more efficient way. Nevertheless, this can also be regarded as an argument for the EC to extend the budget at a later stage.

He also highlighted the importance of having a common project among all 6 BS countries, for example in the area of transport, building on already existing capacities in order to develop inter-modal transportation by using short-sea ferry lines and train connections among the ports of the region. Moreover, a significant action would be to facilitate the trade of goods within the region and also at a broader scale, e.g. to the Caspian region, to China or up to northern Europe and the Baltics. In this regard, Mr Chentsov stressed the importance of tackling the bottlenecks that exist at the BS region's borders and of paying attention to new

technologies and advanced information exchange systems. He concluded by suggesting to focus more on multi-lateral projects while using the experience previously gained through bi-lateral actions.

After this contribution, **Ms GMINDER** took the floor and confirmed that, to her knowledge, there is no project yet where all countries of the region (6+1) are collaborating together, so she welcomed the last comment of Mr Chentsov as a very good proposal.

Speaker: Mr David JAVAKHADZE

Acting Deputy Head of the Transport Policy Department, Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia

Mr JAVAKHADZE presented some recent developments in the transport sector of Georgia as well as some planned activities which shall contribute to the development of the blue economy in the BS region and of maritime clusters.

An important project for the development of port infrastructure in Georgia is the construction of a new deep-sea port in Anaklia. This port is of high importance for the development of the transit potential and is expected to result in a significant increase of cargo turnover on the territory of Georgia. Moreover, the construction of the port improves the connectivity of Georgian ports with other BS ports. There are four strategic advantages of this port:

1. a suitable location
2. suitability for big vessels like panmax-type of vessels
3. one-stop solution with simple and fast procedures
4. all-year-round safe navigation.

In order to ensure safe and secure navigation and the protection of the environment, the Government of Georgia shall strive to ensure that the project is implemented in accordance with the best European practices and in compliance with the obligations of Georgia under the recently initialled association agreement.

Another important priority is the development of other BS ports. In October 2013, a MoU between the relevant Ministries of Romania and Georgia has been signed regarding the establishment of a ferry connection between the ports of Constanţa (Romania) and Poti and Batumi (Georgia). Currently there are talks concerning potential private operators of the ferry line.

Particular attention is paid to environmental aspects and security and safety issues. The accession agreement envisages obligations for Georgia to implement 23 maritime transport-related EU directives and regulations. The harmonisation of Georgian legislation with EU standards shall facilitate the development of the blue economy. Georgia very much appreciates EU technical assistance in this context.

Lastly, Mr JAVAKHADZE expressed his agreement with previous speakers, who highlighted the importance of cross-border cooperation, and emphasised that this cooperation should be focused on the elimination of barriers to international trade, on enhanced safety and security and on approximation of national legislations to EU standards. Projects should be focused on all these issues because these are vital for the achievement of the competitiveness of the BS transport corridor that connects Europe to Asia. In this context, agreements like the one on Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) recently initialled between the EU and Georgia are very important. Hence, in his view, cross-border cooperation (CBC) projects shall be focused on the effective implementation of the principles of the association agreement and DCFTA by the relevant stakeholders.

Ms Beate GMINDER (Chair) summarised that a lot is already being done in transport and transport cooperation, but that still more can be done and this should be more multi-lateral.

Speaker: **Ms Tanya DIMITROVA**

Policy officer, EU Neighbourhood, Middle East, Black Sea region, DG Research and Innovation, European Commission

Title: Research and Innovation in Support of Blue Growth and Blue Economy in the Black Sea

Ms DIMITROVA started by emphasising that research and innovation are of paramount importance for the development of the blue economy and for blue growth. They are essential parts of the five focus areas of the blue growth communication presented in this conference. Research and innovation are important for:

- the development of blue energy, because we have to develop green technologies to make use of the tidal energy etc.
- the development of aquaculture, e.g. the farming of new species or to go further offshore
- the exploration or mineral resources on the bottom of the BS (which is relatively unexplored)
- coastal tourism, where innovation can play an important role.
- bio-technology as a fast developing sector, with big interests of the public and private sector, which is largely based on research and development.

Research and innovation, hence, are important for the social and economic development of the BS area. They require substantial investments on the part of all stakeholders, public and private sector.

Research and innovation are also in the core of the Europe 2020 strategy. There is a programme to support the efforts for increased smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe called “Horizon 2020”. This is the follow-up of the research framework programmes

(FP7). The novelty about Horizon 2020 is that innovation has been explicitly put as a very important part of the programme; research results should reach society. The programme has an overall budget of 79 million Euro for its whole period 2014 to 2020 and will be organised in bi-annual work programmes and specific calls.

According to Ms DIMITROVA, Horizon 2020 is the most open programme in the world and open to almost all sectors and all international partners. It is based on a multi-actor approach and aims to stimulate multi-disciplinary cooperation and private-public partnership. Clusters fit very well into this approach. Ms DIMITROVA therefore encouraged cluster initiatives around the BS to explore the possibilities of Horizon 2020.

Horizon 2020 is organised around major societal challenges and has targeted actions for cooperation with specific areas, including the BS. Among the societal challenges, which are the thematic areas, there is energy, agriculture, marine research etc. Another component is industrial leadership, which aims at boosting small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Excellent sciences is a further element.

To the participants of the conference – all the stakeholders, as the calls address public authorities, civil society, industry and research institutes, preferably in consortia that contain each of these elements – the following issues could be of concrete interest:

- There is an open call currently under blue growth focusing on unlocking the potentials of the oceans, sustainably exploiting the diversity of marine life, new offshore challenges, ocean observation technologies etc., all together about a dozen of different topics. Details can be found on the website of Horizon 2020.
- Concerning industrial leadership, there is an open call on biotechnology.
- There is a targeted Black Sea call[25] (about 1.5 million Euro) that aims to encourage the formation of a regional network that would include all BS states, including the surrounding countries. The call aims at enhancing the research and innovation cooperation, academia-business partnerships and at identifying bottlenecks and solutions in cooperation between European partners and partners from the BS region.

Besides providing funding for individual projects, the research programmes usually help the participants to find long-lasting cooperation partnerships and to create fora for cooperation.

All BS countries can participate in the programme, but different BS countries have a different status:

- Bulgaria and Romania as EU members can participate without any restriction
- the same applies to Moldova and Turkey (both under negotiation for association to the programme)
- Georgia, Ukraine: (Eastern Partnership Countries; according to the slide, their entities are eligible for automatic funding from the Programme)
- Russia: (industrialised country; Russian entities presently can apply for funding domestically, there are several funds in Russia that could support the participation and Ms DIMITROVA expressed here hope that this will be the case in the future as well).

[25] http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/mare/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=14534

Concluding her presentation, Ms DIMITROVA emphasised one more time that the programme offers excellent opportunities for the region.

Ms Beate GMINDER (Chair) summarised that this was a very clear call “here we have money, please apply for it”.

Speaker: **Mr Marciel BUSTINDUY NAVAS**

Sustainable Transport Specialist, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

Title: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development: Financing the Maritime Sector in the Black Sea

Mr BUSTINDUY NAVAS started by explaining while the previous presentations talked about funding sources, he is talking about a financing source: The EBRD is a bank, their purpose is to lend money, and they want this money to be paid back. However, EBRD is a publicly owned bank. Their shareholders require them to invest money only in specific projects, in particular in support of private sector development.

The bank is financing projects from Central Europa to Central Asia and about half of the business volume goes to the BS area. In transport, this represents about 400 million Euros per year, about 100-150 million Euros of this go to the maritime sector, for port projects, renewal of the shipping fleet, compliance with international standards etc. The bank also finances projects in other sectors, such as sustainable energy.

Mr BUSTINDUY NAVAS mentioned a number of projects the banks has recently financed or is going to finance, which include a number of port and fleet projects around the BS.

EBRD

- provides finance by lending money to the projects,
- also raises funds from donors for technical assistance to support its clients to overcome barriers in the preparation of their projects,
- in some cases, also participates in policy dialogue activities such as regional frameworks and working groups.

Mr BUSTINDUY NAVAS mentioned two examples for programmes they supported, one for capacity building concerning ballast water, another one for energy efficient technologies in the Russian shipping sector.

Summarising what EBRD can do, Mr BUSTINDUY NAVAS mentioned that they can provide finance and bring the private sector to these debates.

Speaker:	**Mr Damien PÉRISSÉ** Director, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)
Title:	Fostering the Black Sea economy through cross-border projects and maritime clusters

Mr Damien PÉRISSÉ briefly summarised the structure of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR). This includes 150 regions from both, from EU and no-EU member states. CPMR is composed of sub-organisations at sea basin level. One of their regional organisations is the Balkan and Black Sea Regional Commission. Current President of this regional Commission is Dr Ayhan Ozkan, the Deputy Governor of Edirne, Turkey.

The CPMR is a member of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). It has also been involved in the discussions concerning the preparation of the European Neighbourhood & Partnership Instrument (ENPI) Black Sea Programme. In this, they also befit from the experience of other CPMR geographical commissions, e.g. from the Atlantic.

Subsequently, Mr PÉRISSÉ made a few suggestions concerning the strengthening of cooperation at the level of the BS:

- Training for greener and safer maritime transport: Since 2010 they have developed the idea for a kind of “maritime Erasmus”, an exchange between students, professors and other stakeholders from different countries involved in training in the maritime field. They got support for this from DG MOVE and DG MARE. In January 2014, the idea has materialised into a project called “Vasco da Gama”, with a duration of 2 years. The Naval Academy of Varna (Bulgaria) is involved in this project and they are very happy to have a concrete connection to the BS in this way. Other organisations from the BS could be involved at a later stage. A regional implementation of the Vasco da Gama project could be a concrete project for the BS.
- Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP). In the Mediterranean Sea as in the BS, some regions are involved in projects dealing with ICZM and MSP. In the Mediterranean Sea, a number of regions gather in a kind of meta-cluster called Facecoast (www.facecoast.eu). A similar initiative could be developed at the BS.
- CPMR was interested to read in background document for this conference that fisheries landings at the BS dropped by 40% and that there are discussions about the causes for this. They think that for the regions it is important to better understand the reason for this, and would advocate a strengthening of interaction between different stakeholders and of expertise and policy talks about this. They would like to connect this specific issue of fisheries to the broader balance between traditional and emerging uses of the marine environment and maritime space.

Ms Beate GMINDER (Chair) emphasised that the three main suggestions made for future initiatives, namely

- training of seafarers
- maritime spatial planning
- strengthening of local/fisheries communities and investigations into resource use

are definitely worth to be looked at from a broader perspective.

Speaker: Mr Nikolaos EMIRZAS

Executive Manager of the Permanent International Secretariat of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC PERMIS)

Mr Nikolaos EMIRZAS gave some additional information on the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) in order to provide a background to better understand which contributions the organisation can make to the issues that are discussed in the conference.

1. Participation: BSEC has a wide participation: 6 BS riparian states plus Moldova, plus Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Greece and Serbia. BSEC projects would as the general rule imply the participation of all member states; as an exception, participation can be limited to only some member states.
2. Area of activities: BSEC has a very wide range of activities, covering several sectors.
3. Institutions: BSEC is a family of institutions. It has a Parliamentary Assembly, a Business Council, a regional development bank (Black Sea Trade and Development Bank) as well as the International Centre for Black Sea Studies. Each BSEC-related body has its own budget and modalities.

In order to describe the work of BSEC, Mr EMIRZAS made four points:

1. In 2012 the heads of state of the member states adopted the BSEC Economic Agenda; which provides the roadmap for the sectoral cooperation within BSEC for the next about 10 years. Sustainability is the predominant issue of this Economic Agenda.
2. BSEC aims to enhance interaction with other regional and international institutions. A coordination meeting for this is scheduled for March in Turkey.
3. BSEC is in the process of creating a project management unit, in order to increase the organisation's capacity to develop project proposals which are submitted by the member states in various areas of activity.
4. BSEC is following very closely all EU initiatives in the region. The organisation is very much in favour of them, including of the maritime policy for the BS.

Coming to the key question of the chair person concerning which kind of projects they can propose, the speaker explained that he is coming from a Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is mostly involved in large-scale projects. BSEC has such large projects, for instance in the field of transport the Black Sea Ring Highway project and the motorways of the sea – both

colossal projects, where BSEC does not provide the money, but the framework for coordination.

Hence, the first conclusion of Mr EMIRZAS is that an appropriate framework is important for ambitious multilateral projects, in particular for big projects. His second conclusion is that one also has to be practical and down to earth. In BSEC, they also have smaller project, which, however, in fact improve the life of the stakeholders. As an example he mentioned that one may have very modern highways around the BS, but that these are of no use if lorry drivers have to wait for one or two days at a boarder. In BSEC, they have the BSEC permit that is supposed to allow lorry drivers to go through all the BSEC countries without administrative obstacles. Up to now, only 7 BSEC countries are participating, but for lorry drivers from these countries, the project is very useful.

In conclusion, Mr EMIRZAS stated that on the one hand you have to aim high, but on the other hand, you have to listen to the practical problems of the stakeholders and if you are able to provide a framework for decision making just as BSEC does, you can say you did a good job.

Question and Answer session:

Ms Beate GMINDER (Chair) gave the floor to the audience for questions on the presentation or for other contributions.

Mr Radul KOVACHEV, Secretary General of the International Black Sea Club, introduced his organisation and its Executive Director, Mr Evgeny MAMICHEV, who also participated in the conference. He explained that the International Black Sea Club is a network of 29 cities (mainly port cities) from the 6 BS countries plus Greece and has been established in 1992.

The speaker remarked that although the BS region is socio-culturally more homogenous than the Mediterranean, they have less interaction such as cargo and passenger flows between the countries. One problem in his view is that in recent years, politicians of the area have looked to the West, but not so much to their region.

Mr KOVACHEV mentioned that his organisation has carried out two projects under the CBC programme and is interested in the Horizon 2020 programme. According to the speaker, what is needed as a result of such conferences would be simple, consistent and concise steps and projects. He welcomed the contacts that he could make in the framework of this conference and stated that the International Black Sea Club is open for cooperation.

As Mr KOVACHEV had mentioned a delay in the commencement of the new phases of the CBC programme, **Ms Iulia HERTZOG** clarified that the programming period for the new programme phase is 2014 to 2020. Presently, projects under the last programming phase can still be implemented, but while the approval of the regulation for the new phase is delayed, it is time to prepare the projects for this new phase now, to participate in consultations and give feed-back, in order to start the effective implementation as soon as all regulations and programmes are approved.

Ms Beate GMINDER (Chair) closed the panel by thanking the panellists and expressing her hope for projects with the participation of all 6 + 1 BS countries.

Way Forward & Closing Remarks

Ms Monique PARIAT, Director, Mediterranean and Black Sea, DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission

As conclusion from the conference, **Ms Monique PARIAT** stated that there is a need to talk to each other and a need to cooperate and exchange respective experience. In her view, the conference was a significant attempt of DG MARE to strengthen the cooperation in maritime affairs around the BS.

Ms PARIAT drew three specific conclusions from the discussions during the conference:

1. There is a need, if not for more, then certainly for well organised and efficient cooperation. Meetings like this conference can be beneficial, she said, because they take place at a technical level, which is a good starting point. The intention of DG MARE is to add value to cooperation that is already existing between the riparian states around the BS, not to replace existing cooperation mechanisms, but to find synergies and complementarities between the existing cooperation frameworks.

   Ms PARIAT asked for the reason why there should be more cooperation around the BS and stated that the answer can be easily drawn from what was said during the conference. The key reason for more cooperation is the need for a joint management, first of all in view of the very worrying state of resources in the BS, but at the same time also to develop, enhance and tap the potentials of blue growth in this region. This is an interesting prospect in these times of unemployment and economic depression. Ms PARIAT expressed that there is a real chance to provide growth and jobs in all countries around the BS.

2. Cooperation in the region will fully reach its potential impact only with full commitment from all countries around BS. Over the next 7 years, the EU will invest in innovation, research, sustainable growth etc. So, funding opportunities will be available. Now is the time to think this through and to prepare for it, to work on projects at local level, find the right level for cooperation, to exchange business cards with potential partners and start the process.

3. It is clear that future actions should be built in small steps and in full consideration of what exists already and is being done. Support from all levels for projects of technical support on IMP is essential. The planned projects will be open to participation from regional, national and local authorities, particularly in the non-EU MS of the BS, to develop IMP approaches in their respective policies.

To conclude, Ms PARIAT emphasised that this conference and the very active participation have demonstrated that there is a common understanding of the need for a cooperative, collective response in key areas such as fisheries, environment and blue growth. This, in her view, is a basis for a good start to strengthen the maritime agenda at the BS in the years to come.

Thanking everybody for the active participation, the Romanian authorities, the interpreters, and her colleagues who organised the event, Ms PARIAT closed the conference with the appeal to keep in contact and to continue the efforts, to meet regularly and in a couple of years to get together and count the jobs that have been created.

Notetakers

Ms Anna Madriles Helm
Mr Suitbert Schmüdderich
Organisation: COFAD GmbH