**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

**Mr Titus CORLĂȚEAN**, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Romania, opened the conference and passed the floor to **Ms Rovana PLUMB**, Minister of Environment and Climate Change of Romania, who welcomed the participants as well as the representatives of various organisations and transmitted a message in the name of H.E. Mr Victor PONTA, Prime Minister of Romania. Ms Plumb emphasised that the countries neighbouring the Black Sea should contribute to a common interest programme in order to capitalise the potential of the Black Sea. In particular she mentioned blue growth, research activities as well as monitoring and rehabilitation of the environment as fields for concrete action. It is important, she said, to identify complementary areas between the policy of the European Union (EU) and its instruments and the regional mechanisms already in place.

In her keynote speech, **Commissioner Maria DAMANAKI** pointed to the problems of the Black Sea, but also to the good work that has already been carried out. She stressed the need of sea-basin cooperation, the key to which is dialogue between all stakeholders, and the advances made in integrated maritime policy (IMP). Commissioner Damanaki also mentioned the funding framework that the EU is going to make available for the programming period 2014–2020. She appealed to the participants to develop concrete projects, designed from bottom up and with stakeholders' involvement, to solve the most pressing needs and make use of the potentials in a measurable way.

Subsequently, Minister **Titus CORLĂȚEAN** in his keynote speech ensured Romania's support for regional cooperation. In particular, he advocated substantial cooperation between the EU and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). He stressed the need for a coherent approach for the Black Sea region and the necessity to involve non-EU member states, e.g. in the framework of the Black Sea Basin Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) Programme for the period 2014–2020.

**Mr Iulian GROZA,** Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and European Integration of the Republic of Moldova, in his keynote speech said that although the cooperation in the Black Sea area has a long lasting history, there is still a large potential for its further deepening. The Republic of Moldova pays particular attention to the development of new opportunities for the Giurgiulesti International Free Port (GIFP) at the Danube River, which connects Moldova with the Black Sea. Mr Groza finalised his address by saying that in the forthcoming period, projects and activities should be targeted at promoting the blue economy and the competitiveness of the region, the culture of knowledge, as well as safety and human welfare.

**Mr Shalva AMIREJIBI**, Deputy Minister for Environment Protection and Natural Resources of Georgia, addressed the relevance of the transport sector for his country's economy and pointed out that the sustainable development of the blue economy in the Black Sea region is directly linked with the reduction of barriers for international trade. He explained that the Association Agreement between Georgia and the EU initialled in November 2013 defines

obligations for Georgia to implement the transport and environmental directives and regulations in Georgia. This provides a legal framework for a safe and environmental friendly transport sector in his country.

Speaking on behalf of Ms Ramona MĂNESCU, Minister for Transport of Romania, Deputy Minister of Transport **Manuel DONESCU** pointed out that it is the common interest of all states of the Black Sea basin to actively combine all efforts and transform the region into an area of true security, democracy and prosperity. He also highlighted the importance of the Danube River for the connection of the Black Sea region. Mr Donescu concluded by saying that opening new cooperation initiatives and reinforcing the existing ones will boost regional stability and development in the wider Black Sea region.

Speaking on behalf of the Bulgarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr Kristian VIGENIN, the Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria in Romania, **Mr Aleksander FILIPOV**, explained that Bulgaria is member and current Chairman-in-office of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). 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. Mr Filipov highlighted that all aims are achievable through joint efforts, which can deliver tangible results for common problems. Blue Growth, he said, is a chance to sustainably exploit the Black Sea and to create sustainable jobs.

## PANEL 1: Partnership in the Region to Foster Maritime Cooperation

**Prof Dr Dimitrios TRIANTAPHYLLOU**, from the Kadir Has University in Istanbul, opened the session referring to concepts such as clusters, sustainability, stakeholders as well as the importance of the bottom-up approach and the fact of giving the Black Sea region the right of initiative.

**Ambassador Dr Victor TVIRCUN**, Secretary General of the Permanent International Secretariat of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), focused his speech on BSEC's activities. Special attention has been paid to the cooperation in transport, ports, shipbuilding and ship repairing. Tourism is a further priority area in the BSEC economic agenda. Environmental protection and adaptation to climate change were mentioned as key factors for a sustainable economic development. Finally, Dr Tvircun highlighted that strengthening the BSEC-EU relationship is another important priority for BSEC, which is also in the process of enhancing its capacity for implementing projects.

**Dr Valeria ABAZA**, from the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (BSC), mentioned that a collaboration has been established with the group for environmental protection of BSEC, and that BSC is also collaborating with other scientist as well as with NGOs and various international organisations. According to Dr Abaza, business groups and research clusters can be involved in the activities of environmental protection through joint initiatives. Finally, the speaker highlighted that the Black Sea is a very sensitive area and hence, environmental protection cannot be left aside.

**Ambassador David KERESELIDZE**, Director General of the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS), described the centre as a Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)-related institution that deals with research & innovation and academic matters. ICBSS has a wide experience in maritime issues, including related sectors like tourism, energy and environment. The ICBSS' primary strategy is to move towards a green Black Sea, applying concepts such as sustainable development and green innovation. Mr Kereselidze highlighted a project for the creation of a geographical information system based observatory network as well as a project on renewable energy resources in the Black Sea.

**Ms Olivia BACIU**, President of the Black Sea NGO Forum/Romanian NDGO Platform (FOND), described the Black Sea NGO Forum as a unique platform for exchange between different stakeholders from governments, intergovernmental organisations and the civil society in the region. Some of the concrete initiatives arisen are the “Child Pact”, a regional coalition for child protection in the wider Black Sea area, and also the “Youth Network”. Admitting that the integrated maritime policy hasn't been on the Forum's Agenda so far, the speaker expressed an interest to raise awareness about it among its members in the frame of the next Forum. In conclusion, the speaker underlined the importance of civil society organisations for the development of the Black Sea area.

## PANEL 2: Blue Growth: The Integrated Maritime Policy

**Ms Monique PARIAT**, Director of the Mediterranean and Black Sea Directorate of DG MARE, European Commission, gave a presentation on the concept of Blue Growth. The latter consists of 3 components:

1. **Targeted effort towards specific activities** (**focus areas**) as most promising sectors for growth development (together with more traditional blue sectors):
    - Coastal and maritime tourism
    - Blue energy
    - Marine aquaculture
    - Blue biotechnology (marine biotechnology)
    - Sea-bed mining.
2. **Cross-cutting tools** which are specific policy integrated measures across sectors:
    - Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP)
    - Integrated maritime surveillance
    - Marine Knowledge 2020, an EU initiative aiming at improving the access to information about the sea.
3. **Sea-basin strategies**: Strategies and/or respective maritime action plans have been elaborated for the Baltic, the Atlantic, the Adriatic and Ionian seas and the Arctic Ocean 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.

Finally, Ms PARIAT presented the various funding opportunities for IMP for the programming period 2014–2020 which, besides the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), include the other European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI funds), the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), as well as the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation – Horizon 2020.

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

**Mr Shalva AMIREJIBI**, Deputy Minister for Environment Protection and Natural Resources of Georgia, stressed the importance of consensus in issues like stock assessment and underlined that Georgia seeks cooperation with other Black Sea countries on a scientific, managerial and institutional level. For this purpose, a proper platform is needed, which is accepted by all countries of the Black Sea region.

**Dr Oksana VIALOVA**, Executive Director of the Cluster “Products of the Sea” of Sevastopol, Ukraine, explained that the Cluster is formed by partners from the authorities, the business and the science sectors. It aims at giving the main directions for a sustainable and integrated development of fishery and aquaculture. Ms Vialova outlined the various areas where the

cluster is active and observed that EU support will be necessary in order to enhance cooperation in fisheries research and transfer of technology and innovation among Black Sea countries.

**Prof Bayram ÖZTÜRK**, from the Faculty for Fisheries of the University of Istanbul and Head of the Turkish Marine Research Foundation, focused his presentation on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. The speaker referred to the efforts undertaken by the 6 Black Sea countries with the aim to minimise illegal fishing activities. As key players he cited the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) as well as the EU and highlighted the important role that fisheries associations and cooperatives play. The speaker presented a road map for the mitigation of IUU fishing and stressed the importance of monitoring illegal activities and of establishing a list of presumed IUU vessels.

**Mr Abdellah SROUR**, Executive Secretary of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), presented the activities of his organisation. Among others, GFCM promotes scientific research on fisheries and aquaculture, supports management and decision making and underpins Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) efforts. Moreover, it constitutes a common platform for institutions, stakeholders and the civil society. With respect to the Black Sea, 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 in the Black Sea is complicated due to habitat deterioration, overexploitation of stocks and illegal activities. In this sense, the Black Sea Synergy represents an opportunity to revert this trend.

The moderator of the panel, **Mr DONATELLA,** Head of Unit, Conservation and Control in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea of DG MARE, closed the session by emphasising 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 reiterated the importance of finding the correct platform in order to be able to enhance cooperation.

## PANEL 4: Preserving the Marine Environment of the Black Sea

First speaker was **Prof Marusya LUYBCHEVA**, Member of the European Parliament from Bulgaria (S&D), who argued that there are various interlinked environmental problems impacting the Black Sea, but that there is no unified framework for environmental interventions and no common strategic approach. She pointed out that environmental monitoring is important to identify the problems and the causes behind them. Environmental projects should be based on a prioritisation of targets and implemented in coordinated efforts, which should make use of the experience and support of the EU. As a concrete project, she mentioned a Black Sea Risk Assessment Centre.

**Mr Nicola DI PIETRANTONIO** introduced the project “Improving Environmental Monitoring in the Black Sea (EMBLAS)”, involving Georgia, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, and **Mr Andrzej JANUSZEWSKI** presented a complementary project, “**M**arine Strategy Framework Directive Guiding **I**mprovements in the Black **S**ea **I**ntegrated Monitoring **S**ystem (MISIS)”, with Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey participating. The need to improve environmental monitoring in line with joint principles and standards – oriented on the EU Maritime Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) –, to improve compatibility and exchange of data and to involve stakeholders in environmental monitoring was emphasised.

**Mr Gheorghe CONSTANTIN** from the Romanian Ministry of Environment and representative of his country at the Black Sea Commission argued that a healthy environment is the basis for economic activities such as tourism. He promoted the idea of a Black Sea environmental

survey, in particular concerning living resources. Regarding fisheries, he emphasised the need for cooperation between the Black Sea Commission and GFCM.

In the discussion that followed, the speakers referred to the need for a multi-stakeholder platform, the risks and potentials associated with the introduction of alien species in aquaculture, the difficulties related to environmental monitoring of the Black Sea, the fragmentation of data and information as well as the importance of early warning systems among other issues.

The moderator, **Ms FALKENBERG-AMBROSIO,** Head of Section, Regional Programmes Neighbourhood East, DG Development and Cooperation–EuropeAid, underlined the importance of coordinating the various efforts at the various levels, the need for a common methodology with regard to monitoring as well as for a consistent and coherent data-sharing.

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

**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, explained that his country has participated in various projects and programmes in the past programming period and expressed Moldova's determination to continue this during the new phase. He mentioned regional cooperation and alignment to EU standards as important issues and emphasised the importance of the involvement of EU institutions and mechanisms in initiatives for the Black Sea.

**Ms Iulia HERTZOG**, Director of the Managing Authority of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) Cross Border Cooperation (CBC) Black Sea, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, Romania, reported on the achievements of the ENPI CBC programme in the period currently phasing out. A successor programme, European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) CBC is under preparation. This is expected to be more efficient and focussed on objectives. Result-oriented project proposals are needed from potential beneficiaries.

**Mr Vsevolod CHENTSOV**, Director of the Directorate-General for the European Union in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, pointed out that Cross Border Cooperation has created a conducive environment to remove obstacles to free trade, which has previously been hampered by political differences. For the new programming phase, he expressed his support for more multi-lateral projects involving all Black Sea countries (instead of bi- or tri-lateral projects), e.g. in the fields of transport and advanced information exchange systems.

**Mr David JAVAKHADZE** of the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia presented some recent developments and plans for the transport sector of Georgia, among these, the construction of a new deep-sea port in Anaklia and the establishment of regular ferry lines between Romania and Georgia.

**Ms Tanya DIMITROVA**, DG Research and Innovation, emphasised the importance of research and innovation for the development of the blue economy and for blue growth. She presented the EU programme "Horizon 2020", which is follow-up of the research framework programmes (FP7). Horizon 2020 is organised around major societal challenges and has targeted actions for cooperation with specific areas, including the Black Sea. Calls for proposals address different stakeholders, preferably in consortia from different countries. Of interest could be e.g. the calls on blue growth or on industrial leadership with reference to blue biotechnologies. Besides, there is a targeted Black Sea call (ca. 1.5 million Euro) that

aims to encourage the formation of a regional network that would include all Black Sea states and surrounding countries. Ms Dimitrova appealed to the participants to study and make use of these opportunities.

**Mr Marciel BUSTINDUY NAVAS**, Sustainable Transport Specialist from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), presented the financing opportunities offered by his bank in form of loans (not grants). He mentioned a number of projects around the Black Sea that EBRD has recently financed or is going to finance, which include e.g. port and fleet projects and projects in the field of sustainable energy.

Subsequently **Mr Damien PÉRISSÉ** introduced his organisation, the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR). CPMR is composed of sub-organisations at sea basin level, one of these being the Balkan and Black Sea Regional Commission. He mentioned CPMR's experience in other regions, from which the Black Sea region could benefit. Mr PÉRISSÉ proposed concrete projects in the fields of i) training for greener and safer maritime transport, ii) Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) and Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) and iii) research into the broader balance between traditional and emerging uses of the marine environment and maritime space.

**Mr Nikolaos EMIRZAS**, Executive Manager of the Permanent International Secretariat of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC PERMIS), finally gave some additional information on BSEC. He stressed that an appropriate framework is important for ambitious multilateral projects, in particular for big projects, and that BSEC can offer this. On the other side, he said, it is important to listen to the practical problems of the stakeholders. BSEC can implement such smaller, down-to-earth projects.

**Ms Beate GMINDER**, Head of the Unit Maritime Policy in Mediterranean and Black Sea of DG MARE, and moderator of the panel, closed by summarising that the panel demonstrated clear project ideas as well as funding opportunities that should be made use of.

## Way Forward & Closing Remarks

**Ms Monique PARIAT** drew three conclusions from the discussions during the conference:

1. There is a need for well organised and efficient cooperation around the Black Sea. This should be based on the already existing cooperation mechanisms and frameworks to which DG MARE intends to add value. This cooperation can help to solve important problems, like the worrying state of resources in the Black Sea, and to make better use of the potentials of blue growth in the area.
2. Cooperation in the region will fully reach its potential impact only with full commitment from all countries around Black Sea. EU offers significant funding for this for the coming seven years, and it is time to prepare concrete projects now.
3. It is clear that future actions should be built in small steps and in full consideration of what already exists and is being done. The planned projects will be open to participation from regional, national and local authorities, including in non-EU MS of the Black Sea, to develop IMP approaches in their respective policies.

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.