



## Regional Stakeholders Conference

# Black Sea Synergy: the way forward

Thursday 7 November 2019

Athens, Greece

### **Background**

Launched in 2007, the [Black Sea Synergy initiative](#) aims at supporting regional development through cooperation, in a bottom-up and project-oriented approach.

The key elements of the Black Sea Synergy include building confidence, fostering regional dialogue and achieving tangible results for states and citizens in the region<sup>1</sup>.

In the recent Joint Staff Working Document '[Black Sea Synergy: review of a regional cooperation initiative – period 2015 -2018](#)', the EC and the European External Action Service (EEAS) offer a detailed implementation report, highlighting best practices, lessons learnt and key opportunities for further development.

In a sector-oriented approach, the review identifies a number of cooperation fields with significant progress: blue growth, maritime policy, marine research and innovation, fisheries, environmental protection and climate change, cross-border cooperation and civil society engagement.

Additionally, although less developed at the moment, fields of cooperation such as culture and tourism, education, transport and energy, are acknowledged with great potential for cooperation.

### **About the Conference**

Within this context, and as a follow-up to the Ministerial Meeting on BSEC – EU Cooperation (Brussels, 18 June 2019), the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) will organise a **Regional Stakeholders Conference on 'Black Sea Synergy: the way forward'**, in Athens, Greece, on **Thursday 7 November 2019**.

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<sup>1</sup> The countries covered by the EU's Black Sea Synergy initiative are: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Romania, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine.

In a bottom-up approach, the event aims to provide a platform for dialogue for stakeholders from EU/MS and non-EU Black Sea countries, to stimulate the discussion on the future of the Black Sea Synergy in the short and medium term.

Through interactive thematic working groups, special emphasis will be placed on the fields of cooperation identified with some progress, i.e. **culture and tourism, education, transport and energy**, in order to overcome bottlenecks and maximize their potential.

Specific objectives:

- a) To **assess lessons learnt, opportunities & challenges**, as well as the level of engagement of all relevant stakeholders (government, industry, academia, civil society) in order to strengthen cooperation in these fields;
- b) To **identify and propose concrete ideas and projects** in each cooperation field, to be further pursued by regional stakeholders, in EU programmes and financial instruments, and/or in other national, regional, international funding mechanisms;
- c) To elaborate and **propose policy recommendations** to support a practical, result-oriented intra- and bi- regional cooperation.

The event is organised by the [International Centre for Black Sea Studies \(ICBSS\)](#) within the framework of the [Hellenic BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office](#). The event is co-funded by DG NEAR, within the framework of the ENI East Instrument.

More information about registration and other logistics will be announced soon.

*We look forward to welcoming you!*

Organised by: International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS)



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Within the framework of the Hellenic BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office

