



## PRESS RELEASE

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### 7th International Black Sea Symposium

The International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) successfully organized the 7th International Black Sea Symposium on “Perspectives on Tourism in the Black Sea area” at Divani Palace Acropolis Hotel, in Athens, from 16 to 18 October 2014.

In its seventh year, the Symposium built on the success and positive impact of its previous six editions to bring together the next generation of stakeholders with an interest in the Black Sea area, focusing on *tourism*, a cross-cutting sector of economy of the wider Black Sea region.

Opening the Symposium, ICBSS Director General, Dr. Zefi Dimadama, thanked the honourable guests, participants and speakers for their participation at the Symposium and highlighted the significant contribution of tourism to sustainable development; its diversity and new linkages that need to be explored further, such as medical tourism, gastronomic and film tourism.

During his speech, keynote speaker and special guest of the ICBSS in Athens, Mr. Francesco Frangiali, Honorary Secretary General of the UN World Tourism Organisation, underlined the importance of the tourism industry for the world economy, as it represents approx. 9% of world GDP, and pointed out its continuous development in the wider Black Sea region.

Welcome speeches were delivered by Mr. Panos Livadas, Secretary General of the Greek National Tourism Organisation, Dr. Sergei Goncharenko, Chairman of the ICBSS Board of Directors and Deputy Director of the Dept. of Economic Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Michael Christides, Director of the B' Directorate International Economic Affairs of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Coordinator of the Hellenic BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office, and Ambassador Bratislav Dordevic, Executive Manager of BSEC PERMIS who delivered a welcome address on behalf of Ambassador Dr. Victor Tvircun, Secretary General of the BSEC Organisation.

Within three days of interactive sessions, twenty young professionals, including policy-makers, academics, journalists, diplomats, Members of Parliament, entrepreneurs, civil society leaders and researchers primarily from the countries of the wider Black Sea area, EU member states and Central Asia, and fifteen renowned international experts from the tourism industry, had the opportunity to explore and discuss the perspectives of sustainable tourism in relation to its social and economic impact on the Black Sea countries.

Special emphasis was put on cooperation for common sustainable tourism strategies, policies and practices, social and cultural linkages, youth and new developments in tourism.

Through the 7th IBSS, the ICBSS aimed at offering an assessment on the sector's potential with respect to development and regional cooperation that will serve as working platform for the

BSEC Organisation, regional and international stakeholders. The scientific outcome of the Symposium will be published in a **Special Edition of the ICBSS Xenophon Paper Series**, which will include the contributions of participants and speakers, as they were drafted and elaborated during a *world session café* on the third day of the Symposium.

The 7th International Black Sea Symposium was organised with support of the **Black Sea Trade and Development Bank**, under the aegis of the **Hellenic Ministry of Tourism**, under the auspices of the **Greek National Tourism Organisation**, within the framework of the **Hellenic BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office**.

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**About the ICBSS:** The International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) was founded in 1998 as a non-profit organisation. It has since fulfilled a dual function. On the one hand, it is an independent research and training institution focusing on the wider Black Sea region. On the other hand, it is a related body of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and serves as its acknowledged think-tank. Thus, the ICBSS pursues applied, policy-oriented research, promotes knowledge on the Black Sea region both within and outside its boundaries, and offers policy advice with the aim of fostering multilateral cooperation among the BSEC member states as well as with their international partners.

Director General: Dr. Zefi Dimadama

For further information please visit [www.icbss.org](http://www.icbss.org) or tel: +30 210 324 2321