



PRESS RELEASE

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9th International Black Sea Symposium Blue Growth as a driver for regional development

The International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) organized successfully the 9th International Black Sea Symposium on Blue Growth as a driver for regional development, in Athens, on 20-21 March 2018.

In its ninth year, the International Black Sea Symposium (IBSS) built on the success and positive impact of its previous eight editions to bring together the next generation of stakeholders with an interest in the Black Sea area, focusing on *blue growth*, a long term strategy for sustainable development in the marine and maritime sectors.

Opening the Symposium, ICBSS Director General Mr. Georgios Mitrakos, highlighted the importance of coordinated action among all involved stakeholders that will allow for a result-oriented strategy and inclusive blue growth. To this end, as he noted, the aim of the 9th IBSS was to enable constructive dialogue and generate future synergies.

Keynote speech was delivered by the Secretary General of the BSEC Organisation, H.E. Ambassador Michael B. Christides. Opening his speech, Amb. Christides underlined *“Growth was, is and will remain the objective of humans”*. He continued stressing that, our adaptation to the continuously growing technological impact and innovation demands for joint cooperation and coordination. As he noted, *“the BSEC Organisation has invested a lot of efforts in new realities”* and will continue to support initiatives that aim to motivate the youth and *“bring forward a new generation of stakeholders”*.

The Symposium was developed in four targeted sessions, focusing on i) interregional cooperation and governance, ii) entrepreneurship and competitiveness, iii) investment in people, skills and services, and iv) knowledge and mitigation measures.

Within two days of interactive discussions, seventy participants, speakers and observers had the opportunity to network, to exchange knowledge and to form ideas for new joint projects related to sustainable blue growth in the wider Black Sea region.

Among the distinguished participants of the 9th IBSS were the Vice-Mayor of the Municipality of Piraeus, Mr. Petros Kokkalis, the Deputy Secretary General of PABSEC, Mr. Miltiadis Makrygiannis, the Honorary Consul of Italy in Piraeus, Capt. Mauro Renaldi, the first Secretary of the Embassy of Italy, Mr. Enrico Barbato, Senior Officials from the Embassies of the BSEC Member States in Athens and the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Director of the Romanian Diplomatic Academy and Chairman of the ICBSS Board, Mr. Dan Petre, Mr. Leonardo

Manzari, Director of the European Institute of EurAsian Dialogue in Italy, as well as policy-makers, academics, journalists, entrepreneurs, civil society representatives and researchers primarily from the countries of the wider Black Sea area and the EU member states.

The results of the 9th IBSS will be published in a collective edition of the **ICBSS Xenophon Paper Series**, which will include the contributions of speakers and participants to the event.

More information about the 9th International Black Sea Symposium is available on www.icbss.org

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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 Organization 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: Mr. Georgios Mitrakos

For further information please visit www.icbss.org or tel: +30 210 324 2321