



BLACK SEA
HORIZON
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Bi-regional STI Dialogue

Report on relevant policy dialogue activities with focus on the strengths and weaknesses in the cooperation with each forum, including also an assessment of activities towards EU MS less active in INCO actions.

Final Document

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| Abstract | The Black Sea Horizon project (BSH) aims to support the EU's external relations with the Black Sea region by activities and actions which were implemented with the ultimate objective to involve all interested relevant stakeholders in the field of STI cooperation and optimise the framework for cooperation between EU MS and the non-EU BS countries. To that purpose, a systematic communication was established by the project with specific policy dialogue fora and stakeholders with the aim to establish and develop links for future cooperation. |
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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| BSCP | 'EU-Black Sea Cooperation Programme in STI' under preparation in the frame of the BSH Project |
| BSEC | Black Sea Economic Cooperation |
| BSH | Black Sea Horizon project |
| COST | European Cooperation in Science and Technology |
| CPMR | Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe |
| EaP | Eastern Partnership |
| EECA | East Europe and Central Asia |
| EU | European Union |
| EUREKA | Intergovernmental organisation for pan-European research and development funding in innovation |
| GA | General Assembly |
| INCO | International Cooperation |
| MS | Member States |
| R&D | Research and Development |
| RTI | Research Technology Innovation |
| S&T | Science and Technology |
| STI | Science Technology and Innovation |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Black Sea Horizon project (BSH) aims to support the EU's external relations with the Black Sea region by contributing to the ongoing bi-regional STI policy dialogue and to the establishment of supportive framework conditions (pooling of resources, identification of thematic areas of mutual interest, etc.).

This document summarises the procedure and the outcomes of the communication followed towards policy dialogue fora and the national authorities from EU MS, in particular, EU MS less involved in INCO activities.

The purpose was to identify activities of these policy dialogue fora, trigger their interest in participating in the BSH activities and examine the possibilities for future cooperation with the aim to involve the identified stakeholders in the procedure of forming the "EU-Black Sea Cooperation Programme in STI" (BSCP).

The results from this activity could be used for the promotion of the activities of BSH project, while offering the opportunity to involve the identified stakeholders to the shaping of the BSCP.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Black Sea Horizon project (BSH) aims to support the EU's external relations with the Black Sea region by contributing to the ongoing bi-regional STI policy dialogue and to the establishment of supportive framework conditions (pooling of resources, identification of thematic areas of mutual interest, etc.).

In the framework of the project, activities and actions were implemented with the ultimate objective to involve all interested relevant stakeholders in the field of STI cooperation and optimise the framework for cooperation between EU MS and the non-EU BS countries. To that purpose, a systematic communication was established by the project with specific policy dialogue fora and stakeholders with the aim to establish and develop links for future cooperation.

Initial contact was established through email communication as well through invitation of those stakeholders who were interested in the project's activities with the purpose to inform them about the procedure of forming the "EU-Black Sea Cooperation Programme in STI" (BSCP).

Communication was challenging, since the response rate was quite low, while a considerable amount of stakeholders referred that, although they are interested in cooperation with the BS region, there were time/resources limitations. Despite the raised challenges, there were positive replies, mainly, from the BSEC, the CPMR and the JRC.

Communication with the identified stakeholders is frequent along the duration of the project, with the aim to keep them informed about the progress of the BSCP and other project's activities.

2. METHODOLOGY

Communication had two target groups a) policy dialogue fora and b) national authorities from EU MS less involved in INCO activities.

a) Communication with policy dialogue fora included:

- EaP Panel on Research and Innovation,
- SFIC (Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation),
- Balkan and Black Sea Regional Commission under the CPMR,
- EUSDR (EU Strategy for the Danube Region),
- Black Sea Synergy (EEAS),
- EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly, and
- BSEC Working Group on S&T.

b) Communication with EU MS, and, in particular, EU MS less involved in INCO activities included ministries, national authorities, agencies, research institutions, etc. (see Annex I for more details). Communication was divided in two focus groups as follows:

- First focus group: UK, Sweden, Finland, Italy, France
- Second focus group: Ireland, Denmark, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Belgium

The project partners assigned a contact person for each group with the purpose to proceed in the communication.

Communication with the target groups included an information package to be promoted as this was the case also with the policy dialogue fora, i.e. a short introduction of BSH Project and a calendar of the forthcoming activities/events (see Annex II). Information expected from each target group included an introduction of the organisation, any available key document of high concern and/or any latest policy development. In addition, a calendar of the forthcoming activities of the organisation was requested with the possibility for our project partners to participate. Finally, one

of the aims of communication was to seek reference of the BSCP in policy documents under development.

The means of communication used included emails, letters, web-conferences and face to face meetings on a regular basis in case there was a development either on the part of the project or of the stakeholders' organisation.

Communication with policy dialogue fora was not in a satisfactory level, since the response rate was very low; as a result, the issue was discussed in depth firstly with the consortium members (during the BSH GA Meeting in Vienna, June 2016) and among the task participants (September 2016). An improved approach of communication was proposed aiming to communicate with alternative contact persons (in the hierarchy of the organisation) or alternative organisations from each country.

In particular, the GA decided upon the following corrective actions:

- Letters to be shortened, follow up with phone calls and addressing adequate staff level in the addressed organisations, not necessarily the directors or head of units but also lower level staff;
- Relevant conferences to be identified in order to establish direct contacts at the desired stakeholder level.

A second round of communication was conducted in December 2016. During the second round, the response rate was higher offering a better overview of the interest of the stakeholders for the BS region and the BSCP, in particular.

3. RESULTS

Overall, the communication with policy dialogue fora and stakeholders from EU-MS less involved in INCO activities resulted in:

- Establishing close communication with BSEC and CPMR;
- Receiving expressions of interest from the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission, the Ministry of Education of France, the Ministry of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy of UK, and the Ministry of Education and Science of Portugal and I-CERCA;
- Receiving information about the lack of specific interest from SFIC, the EaP Panel on R&I and other stakeholders (see below).

3.1.1. *Communication with BSEC and CPMR*

The interest on behalf of both organisations was high, since their activities are related to the Black Sea region.

- The *Working Group on Science and Technology* of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (<http://www.bsec-organization.org>) was informed about the project's activities and participated in the Workshop on the 'EU-Black Sea Cooperation Programme in STI' (December 2016) as well as in the Black Sea Horizon Conference (Athens, May 2017). Based on the ongoing communication, an important milestone for BSEC is the *Third BSEC Action Plan on Cooperation in S&T* for the period 2014-2018 and could be a reference document for the BSCP. In addition, the creation of the Project Management Unit of BSEC is considered to be an important step to support BSEC improve its project output and to promote good practices in project management. On 18 November 2016, a Donor Agreement was signed between the Government of the Russian Federation, the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat and the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank for the creation of a "Black Sea Project Promotion Facility" within BSEC. The aim of the Facility will be to promote projects in Renewable Energy Sources and energy efficiency and support the activity of SMEs and the upgrading of municipal infrastructure in the region.

- The *Balkan and Black Sea Regional Commission under CPMR* (<http://cpmr-balkan-blacksea.org/>) was informed about the project's activities and participated in the Workshop on the 'EU-Black Sea Cooperation Programme in STI' (Brussels, December 2016) as well as in the Black Sea Horizon Conference (Athens, May 2017) which consolidated the BSCP. Communication related to the development of the BSCP is ongoing as well as with regard to the training activities of the project. CPMR provided information about two working groups under this Commission related to tourism and business cooperation as well as about major activities currently under development such as the Vasco de Gama Project (under the Blue Growth Strategy).

Given the interest of the two organisations, the project works closely with BSEC and CPMR in the design and implementation of the BSCP, both at the level of consultation process and of exploitation of the BSCP. The project has also been presented during the last meeting of the Working Group on Science and Technology of BSEC (Istanbul, April 2017).

3.1.2. Expression of interest from various stakeholders

The Ministry of Education of France, the Ministry of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy of UK, the Ministry of Education and Science of Portugal and I-CERCA, the Agency for the Research Centres of Catalonia have expressed their interest in the project's activities as well as in the preparation of the 'EU-Black Sea Cooperation Programme in STI' (BSCP).

However, none of these stakeholders was ready to participate either at the Brussels workshop (December 2016) or at the Athens Conference (May 2017). The project will continue the communication, in particular, with the aforementioned ministries with the aim to seek for cooperation in the framework of BSCP.

In addition, the project established contact with JRC. JRC has a dedicated function in the EUSDR called "JRC support to the EUSDR: Scientific Support to the Danube

Strategy". JRC expressed its potential interest to bring forward actions for the BS region as in the EUSDR. It was invited and participated at the Black Sea Horizon Conference (Athens, May 2017).

3.1.3. Lack of specific interest from SFIC and from the EaP Panel on R&I

The communication with SFIC revealed that there is no specific focus of the Forum for the Black Sea region. SFIC is currently focussing on the STI cooperation between EU and other geographical regions. In addition, SFIC will most probably follow the geographic definitions of other broader EU policies if it should address the region, i.e. focussing on the Eastern Partnership instead of the Black Sea region.

The EaP Panel on R&I is a very relevant policy dialogue forum for most of the countries targeted by the BSH project and the BSCP. It has however its own dynamic and priorities, which follow broader EU policies that differentiate the approach towards the EaP countries and Russia.

Nevertheless, the strong overlap of countries addressed by the EaP Panel and by the BSH project, constitute this Panel an important forum for disseminating and promoting the BSCP. In addition, this Panel could play a key role in the implementation phase of the BSCP since it includes several funding agencies active in the region. In cooperation with the European Commission, which Chairs the Panel, a formal presentation of the BSCP could be envisaged at one of the forthcoming meetings of the EaP Panel on R&I.

3.1.4. Lack of specific interest from other stakeholders

In their communication, some stakeholders mentioned that there is no specific interest for the Black Sea region at the moment (Swedish Research Council; NWO of the Netherlands; Ministry of Jobs Enterprise and Innovation of Ireland), while others highlighted their interest about the region but claimed a lack of capacity for an active

involvement in the current developments (Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland; Academy of Finland; Ministry of Economic Affairs of the Netherlands).

Moreover, some stakeholders highlighted that the Black Sea region is not included in any bilateral cooperation agreement of their country and/or institution, while at the same time it is not foreseen to launch such cooperation (INGENIO - The Institute of Innovation Management and Knowledge of Spain). Lastly, there were some stakeholders stating that their cooperation with the Black Sea Countries is better carried out through the existing European Networks, such as Eureka and COST (VINOVA/Sweden).

4. NEXT STEPS

With this activity, the BSH project aimed to inform selected policy dialogue fora and stakeholders and trigger their interest in the EU-Black Sea STI cooperation. In particular, the main challenge of this activity was to identify and motivate stakeholders for the promotion of the BSCP. Despite the challenges that were raised, motivating policy dialogue fora and stakeholders is a continuous effort along the duration of the project with the aim to result in concrete measures.

To that direction, the project will continue further developing cooperation with fora and stakeholders interested in the Black Sea region. In particular, the project will disseminate the finalised BSCP to the identified policy dialogue fora and stakeholders and will work closely, in particular, with the ones that expressed their interest to collaborate, i.e. BSEC, CPMR and JRC, as well as the relevant ministries and agencies from France, UK, Portugal and Spain. The aim is to involve any interested party, even at the last phase of the BSCP, which is the implementation of the BSCP, as this has been formulated after the Black Sea Horizon Conference, May 2017.

Since one of the project's objectives is to support the EU's external relations with the target region, the activity contributes to the overall ongoing bi-regional and regional STI policy dialogue by increasing the knowledge base about the Black Sea region and the main STI developments in the area.

ANNEXES

Annex I. List of policy dialogue fora and stakeholders

| Organisation / institution (department) | Country |
|---|-------------|
| CNRS - Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (National Center for Scientific Research) | France |
| ANR - L'Agence Nationale de la Recherche | France |
| DGRI - General Direction of Research and Innovation, Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche | France |
| DGCID - Department for scientific cooperation and research | France |
| IFREMER - French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea | France |
| INGENIO - The Institute of Innovation Management and Knowledge | Spain |
| I-CERCA - Agency for the Research Centres of Catalonia | Spain |
| Secretariat General of Science, Technology and Innovation, subordinated to the Secretariat of State of Research, Development and Innovation | Spain |
| VINNOVA - Swedish Innovation Agency | Sweden |
| VR - Swedish Research Council | Sweden |
| RISE - Swedish Research Institute | Sweden |
| Ministry of education and culture | Finland |
| Tekes –Finnish Funding Agency for Innovation | Finland |
| AKA- Academy of Finland | Finland |
| RVO.nl - Netherlands Enterprise Agency | Netherlands |
| NWO - Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research | Netherlands |
| Directorate-General for Enterprise and Innovation, Innovation and Knowledge Department, Ministry of Economic Affairs | Netherlands |
| Ministry, Department of Business, Innovation and Skills | UK |
| ESRC - Economic and Research Council | UK |
| FCT - Foundation for Science and Technology | Portugal |

| | |
|---|---------|
| Research Council of Norway | Norway |
| FIVU - Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation | Denmark |
| DJEI - Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation | Ireland |
| SFI - Science Foundation Ireland | Ireland |
| BELSPO - Belgian Science Policy | Belgium |
| AIO - Flanders Innovation & Entrepreneurship | Belgium |

Annex II. Information Package



Ref.: Invitation to policy dialogue, Black Sea Horizon project

Dear Mr...../Dear Mrs.....

I am contacting you, in the framework of the **Black Sea Horizon project**, currently implemented under the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation “Horizon 2020”, to kindly invite your [institution/organisation/forum](#) in an interactive cooperation.

The project was launched in February 2015 and involves 19 partners from different countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Turkey. It aims to sustainably enhance bi-regional science, technology and innovation (STI) cooperation between the EU and the Black Sea region.

One of the main results of the Black Sea Horizon project will be a consolidated “EU-Black Sea Cooperation Programme in STI (BSCP)”, to be defined through a consultation and dialogue process. In this context, the project aims to establish and develop links to relevant stakeholders and external policy dialogue fora, and to cooperate with them in the process of preparing the BSCP.

For the same goal, the Black Sea Horizon (BSH) project platform (<http://blacksea-horizon.eu/>) offers you the possibility to disseminate your own activities, promote your [organisation / institution / forum](#) and share related information with targeted audience via BSH online platform and dedicated BSH newsletter.

With this opportunity we would like to introduce to you, in more details, the goals of the project, the progress of our activities, the results achieved so far and to invite you to attend our future public events. So, I warmly invite you to consult, here attached, *a detailed description of the Black Sea Horizon project and its up-to-date achievements, including a calendar of the project events.*

Given the expertise of your [institution / organisation / forum](#), we are strongly convinced that a fruitful cooperation, dialogue and exchange of information will be established in the context of building an efficient policy dialogue in the Black Sea region and setting up the “EU-Black Sea Cooperation Programme in STI”.

Therefore, we would very much appreciate to receive further information about your activities with a view to identifying our common ground for dialogue under the BSH Project and in particular, concerning the “EU-Black Sea Cooperation Programme in STI (BSCP)”. Notably:

What are your current activities in the Black Sea region;

What are the latest policy developments of your country regarding STI international cooperation in the Black Sea region;

Any information on upcoming events related to STI developments in the region.

On behalf of the Black Sea Horizon project team, I would like to thank you in advance for your cooperation. For any further information and suggestions of collaboration, please contact us at:

Looking forward to our cooperation and fruitful exchange.

Yours sincerely,