



International High-level Conference

Inter-basin Cooperation on Marine Litter: a focus on the Danube River and the Black Sea

Thursday, 4 April 2019

SOFIA HOTEL BALKAN
Sofia, Republic of Bulgaria

Concept

Over the past years, there is an ongoing discussion among stakeholders on blue economy, which includes the sustainable development of marine and maritime policy-driven activities.

The Danube River and the Black Sea basins are considered valuable natural assets of great environmental and economic importance; hence, their great potential for achieving Blue Growth is widely acknowledged. The area's maritime and coastal capital is very significant for safeguarding healthy seas and ecosystems, while generating jobs and economic growth.

In order to achieve sustainable blue growth in the region, a sustainable and result-oriented policy framework is necessary, addressing opportunities and challenges. The problem of marine litter is a global challenge. Each year, millions of tons of land- and sea-based litter end up in the seas, affecting marine organisms, biodiversity, human livelihoods and the economy.

A significant portion of the global plastic production is transported to the seas by rivers. Data shows that the Danube River carries 530–1,500 tons of plastic into the Black Sea annually. Unsustainable waste management, lack of infrastructures and of coordinated national and regional policies, in addition to insufficient awareness, aggravate the problem, thus undermining any attempts to sustainable blue growth.

Although tailored Action Plans for marine litter management exist already for the Mediterranean and the Baltic Sea, one targeting the Black Sea basin is still under development. To this end, in order to tackle successfully a major environmental and economic threat, like marine litter, it is important to foster enhanced inter-basin cooperation and coordinated action among all parties involved.

Within this framework, the Permanent International Secretariat of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC PERMIS) and the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS), with the expertise support of the Ministry of Environment and Water of the Republic of Bulgaria, will organise an **International High-level Conference on “Inter-basin Cooperation on Marine Litter: a focus on the Danube River and the Black Sea (ICML)”**, in Sofia, Bulgaria, on **Thursday 4 April 2019**.

The overall objective of the ICML will be to stimulate and facilitate enhanced inter- and intra-regional cooperation at policy, business and research levels, in order to improve the framework conditions and to mitigate obstacles for sustainable marine litter management in the target region.



Through interactive sessions, the ICML will aim i) to identify common challenges and priorities for marine litter management in the Danube River and the Black Sea basins, ii) the transfer of knowledge and experience of marine litter management from the neighbouring basins, the Baltic Sea and the Mediterranean, and iii) to motivate social responsibility and raise awareness on sustainable waste management.

Its findings will be published as a consolidated policy paper addressing the marine litter management in the Danube River and the Black Sea, with a view to contributing to discussions for the implementation of the marine litter reduction measures, including introduction of related good waste management practices.

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About the Organisers:

- ***Permanent International Secretariat of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC PERMIS)***

The BSEC PERMIS performs the secretarial duties for the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC Organization), a full-fledged intergovernmental, regional economic organization that includes 12 Member States from the wider Black Sea region (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine).

BSEC has more than 25 areas of cooperation, which are of importance to its Member States, among them environmental protection, agriculture, culture, tourism, science and technology, education, energy, SMEs, emergency assistance and etc. After completing its 25th year of existence (founded in 1992) BSEC is today the oldest, most representative, most inclusive and institutionally mature intergovernmental Organization in the wider Black sea area, which contributes to the promotion of regional cooperation and economic development.

- ***International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS)***

Founded in 1998, as a non-profit organization, the ICBSS is a research and training institution focusing on the wider Black Sea region and a "Related Body" of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), serving as its acknowledged think-tank. ICBSS' main objective is to enhance knowledge through research and to foster multilateral cooperation among the BSEC Member States, regional and international partners.

As a research and training institution, ICBSS' diverse activities include the elaboration and publication of research papers and studies, the organisation of a variety of scientific events, the dissemination of information and data, the management of research projects, as well as networking activities. The Centre is specialised in promoting synergies between different stakeholders and establishing networks based on a vast pool of contacts.