



PRESS RELEASE

Athens 9 December 2019

Confidence Building in the Black Sea Region

The **International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS)** in cooperation with **the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF)** organised successfully the first ever Regional High-Level Conference on ‘**Confidence Building in the Black Sea Region**’, in Athens, Greece, on Monday 9 December 2019,

The event was held under the **Hellenic BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office (1.7 – 31.12.2019)**.

The main objective of the conference was to provide a platform for dialogue for national and regional stakeholders, to stimulate the discussion on and share knowledge about confidence building through cross-pillar actions at economic, environmental, cultural and social levels.

Welcome addresses were delivered by **Mr. Georgios MITRAKOS**, Director General of International Centre of Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) and **Professor Dr. Nicole DEITELHOFF**, Director of the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF).

Delivering the keynote speech, **Mr. Thanos DOKOS**, **Alternate Security Advisor to the Prime Minister**, underlined the importance of non-military confidence building measures in creating a stable environment that will allow for productive cooperation and economic growth; while he particularly highlighted the example of Greek –Turkish CBMs over the years.

The Conference was consisted of three panels. Moderated by Mr. Georgios MITRAKOS, ICBSS Director General, the first panel focused on the level of non-military confidence building measures in the Black Sea Region. Speakers **Mr. Asaf HAJIYEV, PABSEC Secretary General** addressed “The role of parliaments in the development of the Black Sea Region”, **Dr. Ioannis STRIBIS, Assistant Professor at the University of the Aegean**, discussed about the “Confidence- and Security- Building Measures in the Naval Field in the Black Sea” and **Mr. Dan PETRE, Director General of the Romanian Diplomatic Institute** discussed about “From Balance of threats to balance of trust – a critical realist overlook on CBMs”.

Speakers of the second panel shared practices from other regions, in particular, **Mr. Benjamin SCHALLER (Arctic University of Norway)** presented the lessons learnt from the Norwegian-Russian Relations in the Barents Region; **Ms. Veronika JOZWIAK (The Polish Institute of International Affairs)**, shared the experience of the Visegrad Group as an instrument of promoting political, economic and military cooperation and confidence-building in Central Europe; **Mr. Martins LEGZDINS (Council of the Baltic Sea States)** presented the good case of the CBSS in building collaboration and trust in the Baltic Sea. The second panel was moderated by **Mr. Ian ANTONY, Director of the European Security Programme at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)**.

The third panel, **Dr. George TZOGOPOULOS, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre International de formation europeenne (CIFE)**, addressed other paradigms and relevant concepts of confidence building. On behalf of co-organisers, **Dr. Hans-Joachim SPANGER (PRIF)**, argued the question “Do Confidence-Building Measures build confidence?”; **Mr. Vitaly FEDCHENKO (SIPRI)** examined the concept of regional exercises to strengthen nuclear security as a confidence-building measure; **Ms. Anna OROSZ, (Institute of Foreign Affairs and Trade - IFAT)** shared the results of a recent reconciliation project focusing on the Western Balkans, implemented under the Visegrad Fund.

The presentations of speakers and more information are available on www.icbss.org