



PRESS RELEASE

Athens, 17 June 2020

ICBSS – BSEC – DG MARE online Workshop

The International Centre for Black Sea Studies ([ICBSS](#)), the Organization for the Black Sea Economic Cooperation ([BSEC](#)) and the EU Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries ([DG MARE](#)), in cooperation with the Bulgarian Coordination of the Common Maritime Agenda, organised an online workshop on [“How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected Blue Economy in the Black Sea region? Potential response actions”](#) on Tuesday 16 June 2020.

Under the moderation of **Mr. Stavros KALOGNOMOS**, Executive Secretary, Balkan and Black Sea Commission (BBSC), Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), distinguished panelists, **Mr. Christos ECONOMOU**, Head of Unit Sea-basin Strategies, Maritime Regional Cooperation and Maritime Security, DG MARE, **Mr. Peter JANECH**, Senior Officer, Department for Europe UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), **Ms. Nadezhda BUHOVA**, Director of European Coordination and International Relations Directorate and Coordinator of the Steering Group on the Common Maritime Agenda, Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications of the Republic of Bulgaria, and **Mr. Konstantin PETROV**, GFCM Subregional Coordinator for the Black Sea, exchanged views on the initial **impact of the Covid-19 outbreak on key sectors of the Blue Economy in the Black Sea region**, i.e. *coastal and maritime tourism, maritime transport, fisheries and aquaculture*.

Particular attention was paid on the identification of the potential response actions, also through the regional framework provided by the [Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea](#), a unique framework of regional cooperation for the Black Sea region.

Opening remarks were delivered by **Mr. Alexandru ENE**, Director for the Western Balkans and Regional Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, on behalf of the Romanian BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office. As he pointed out *“although the pandemic affected all Blue Economy sectors, it brings new opportunities for economic rebound in the post Covid-19 era”*, therefore it is important to enhance regional cooperation and identify concrete ways to move forward. To this end, Mr. Ene highlighted the important framework documents, the Common Maritime Agenda and the Black Sea Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda, endorsed in May 2019, during the Romanian EU Presidency.

From his side, on behalf of DG MARE, **Mr. Christos ECONOMOU** commented on the timely organisation of the workshop, as the covid-19 crisis affected human and economic activities and to this end, it is important to continue joining forces in order to respond to this crisis. He underlined the significance of existing frameworks like the Common Maritime Agenda, or the EU Green Deal, which provide priorities but also, recommendations to mitigate effectively the impact. As Mr. Economou noted, *“the target is sustainable blue economy”*.

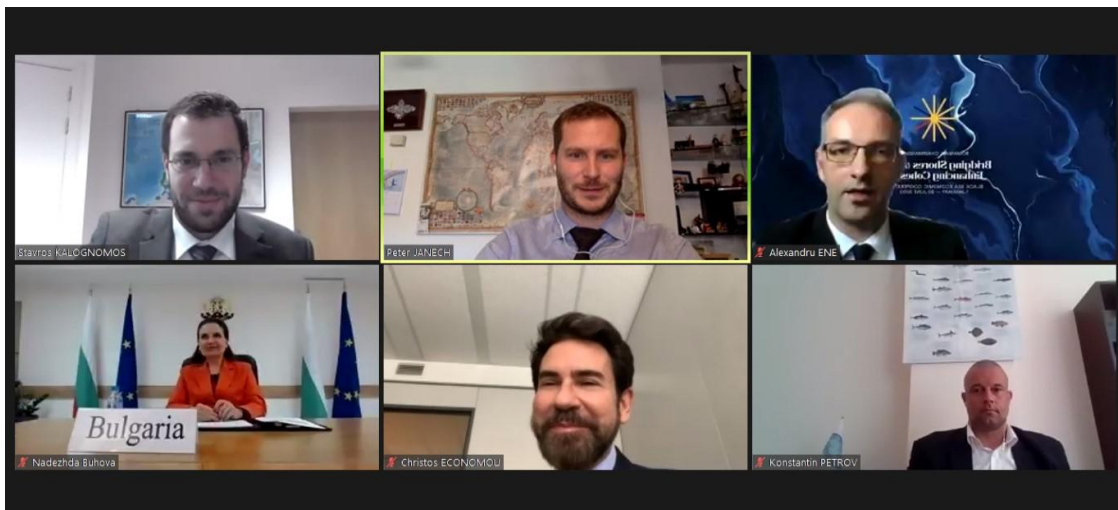
From their perspective, Mr. Peter JANECH, Ms. Nadezhda BUHOVA and Mr. Konstantin PETROV, focused on the specific sectors identified to have been mostly affected by the Covid-19 pandemic: a) [Coastal and Maritime Tourism](#), b) *Maritime Transport*, c) *Fisheries and Aquaculture*, respectively.

Closing the online workshop, Mr. Stavros KALOGNOMOS informed the audience about the forthcoming webinar of the [SEARICA Intergroup](#) on *“Towards Sustainable Tourism in the Maritime and Coastal Regions of Europe - Perspectives on the recovery from the Covid-19 crisis and beyond”*, with the collaboration of the CPMR and the Travel Foundation, to be held on 7 July 2020. More information will available in due course.

During Q&A, participants highlighted important issues for future discussions and further deliberations, such as the aspect of tourism diversification to mitigate the covid-19 impact; the potential involvement of landlocked countries in blue economy; the role of public-private partnerships.

In total, **95 participants** from around the world joined the webinar. This was the second of a series of webinars planned by the ICBSS to launch a new era of online meetings on key issues targeting the wider Black Sea region.

You may visit the [ICBSS channel on Youtube](#) to watch the full [Webinar](#)



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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 to foster multilateral cooperation among the BSEC member states as well as with their international partners.