



5th International Black Sea Symposium 2012

2-4 July 2012

“The Black Sea region as an influential crossroad between East and West: A path towards extroversion”

The International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) launched the International Black Sea Symposium project in 2008 in the context of a need for transnational cooperation in the wider Black Sea region. Now, the need for increased cooperation becomes ever more evident in the framework of the recent financial crisis and the new global challenges.

In its fifth year, the Symposium builds on the success and positive impact of its previous four editions to bring together the next generation of stakeholders with an interest in the Black Sea area. Moreover, the Symposium focuses on a new dimension, **the extroversion of the Black Sea area as an influential crossroad between East and West.**

The Black Sea region includes twelve countries connecting two different continents: Europe and Asia. Only six countries have physical boundaries and direct access to the coast of the Black Sea (Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Georgia), while the rest (Greece, Serbia, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Moldova) are connected to it through strong historical, economic, and social bonds.

The area has always been a crossroad of political, economic and diversified societal cultures. In the present, it plays the role of an economic, geo-political and trade hub, and it serves as a crucial energy trade corridor connecting Asia with Europe. At the same time, specific interest for the Black Sea region with respect to energy and security is expressed by major global actors from both sides of the Atlantic (the USA and the EU), the neighboring countries of Eastern Europe, Central Asia, South Caucasus, the Mediterranean Sea and the Far East (e.g. China, India, et. al.).

All the abovementioned elements form an extremely interesting ground in which many cooperation schemes and synergies have been promoted, but where also a number of acute problems still persist, such as trade barriers, insufficient energy security, illegal migration, “frozen” conflicts and environmental degradation.

Within this framework, the Symposium highlights the relations of the Black Sea Region with three macro-territories /geographical areas that will be examined in **three separate sessions: a) Europe, b) Atlantic Arc, c) East** (Central Asia, South Caucasus and Far East).

All sessions will address common sectoral issues, concerning:

1. **Stability, Security and International Relations:** institutions and actors
2. **Sustainable Economic Development:** regional cooperation, trade, innovation, science and technology
3. **Energy:** growth, financial crisis and energy security, energy exchanges and markets
4. **Environment:** environmental governance, climate change, energy efficiency, alternative energy sources.

Enhancing stability, fostering economic cooperation, promoting energy security and integrating environmental aspects in all sectoral policies constitute the main priorities of the ICBSS aiming at fostering Sustainable Development in the Black Sea area in the future. Additionally, in the light of the 20th anniversary of the Organisation of BSEC, success stories of regional cooperation, as well as lost opportunities and future challenges, concerning the main institutions and actors involved in the Black Sea Region will be discussed.

In this context, the Symposium's Agenda will be structured as follows:

1. **Introductory Session:** The State of Art: Problems and challenges of the Black Sea Region
2. **Session I:** The Black Sea Region and Europe
3. **Session II:** The Black Sea Region and the Atlantic Arc
4. **Session III:** The Black Sea Region looking East

In this regard, we invite institutions, academics, researchers, entrepreneurs and policy makers, of different backgrounds with expertise in these fields, from around the world, to discuss, to exchange views and to enhance the dialogue among "domestic" and "external" knowledge.