



PRESS RELEASE

Athens, 4 July 2013

6th International Black Sea Symposium

The **International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS)** is hosting the **6th International Black Sea Symposium** on “**Empowering Civil Society in the Black Sea region: a tool for Innovative Social Change**” at Divani Palace Acropolis Hotel, in Athens, from 4 to 6 July 2013.

In its sixth year, the Symposium builds on the success and positive impact of its previous five editions to bring together the next generation of stakeholders with an interest in the Black Sea area, introducing a new dimension, *civil society*, as a key element to economic growth, sustainable development and social change.

Opening the Symposium, **ICBSS Director General, Dr. Zefi Dimadama**, addressed the welcome speech and thanked **Mr. Henri Malosse, President of the European Economic and Social Committee** for his presence at the event. **Keynote speaker and special guest of the ICBSS in Athens, Mr. Henri Malosse**, highlighting the motto of his Presidency in the EESC, “*a wind of change*”, stressed the necessity to “*create better conditions for the next generation; a promising future that will come from the bottom, from the people, civil society and networks*”. As he pointed out, youth unemployment constitutes a key priority to EESC. Concluding his speech, Mr. Malosse underlined the importance of integration within the EU, as well as, of further strengthening EU relations with its neighbours as means to cooperation and sustainable development.

Twenty **young professionals** including policy-makers, academics, journalists, diplomats, Members of Parliament, entrepreneurs, civil society leaders and researchers primarily from the countries of the wider Black Sea area, EU member states and Central Asia are attending three days of interactive sessions.

The **first day of the 6th IBSS** was successfully concluded with the participation of renowned speakers who addressed the challenges and opportunities of social innovation as a tool for development, especially within the framework of NGO regional networks in the wider Black Sea area.

The 6th IBSS continues on its second day, addressing the issues of human capital, as core element to achieving development, and of Corporate Social Responsibility as a tool to empowering civil society.

About the project: the **International Black Sea Symposium project** was launched in 2008 and aims to contribute to confidence building and networking across the Black Sea region and beyond, by providing a forum for study and networking in a multicultural and interdisciplinary environment.

For further information please visit www.icbss.org or tel: +30 210 324 2321.

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About the ICBS: The International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBS) 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 ICBS 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 of fostering multilateral cooperation among the BSEC member states as well as with their international partners.

Director General: Dr. Zefi Dimadama