



CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

7th International Black Sea Symposium

on

“Perspectives on Tourism in the Black Sea area”

Athens, Greece

16 - 18 October 2014

In its seventh year, the International Black Sea Symposium (IBSS) project builds on the success and positive impact of its previous six editions to bring together the next generation of stakeholders with an interest in the Black Sea area, focusing on *tourism*, a cross-cutting sector of economy of the wider Black Sea region. The **7th International Black Sea Symposium on “Perspectives on Tourism in the Black Sea area”** will be held in Athens, Greece, from 16 to 18 October 2014. The ICBSS will welcome young professionals and international experts, for an intensive course on Black Sea issues. The event’s working language will be English.

More about the 7th IBSS

The Black Sea region, with its diverse and unique landscape, cultural wealth, historic heritage and wide variety of opportunities for leisure, stands among world’s most beautiful tourist destinations, attracting millions of tourists from around the world. **Tourism provides the Black Sea countries** with an excellent **opportunity for social development and economic growth** that should be further explored in order to reach its full potential in a sustainable manner.

Over the years the quality and quantity of tourist services in the Black Sea region have improved significantly, nonetheless, the **sustainable development of the sector** along with the **regional cooperation** allow room for improvement. Within the BSEC Organization, Member States foster cooperation towards enhancing existing connections through the adoption of joint action plans for the region.

Speakers and participants with acute interest in or involved with tourism will have the opportunity to **explore and discuss the perspectives of sustainable tourism** in relation to its **social and economic impact** on the Black Sea countries. Through the IBSS, the ICBSS is aiming at offering an **assessment on the sector’s potential** with respect to development and regional

cooperation that will serve as working platform for BSEC Member States and regional and international stakeholders.

Special emphasis will be put on the following areas:

- Cooperation for common sustainable tourism - strategies, policies and practices

Developing and supporting sustainable tourism require considerable efforts by regional and national stakeholders. In order to improve the accessibility to the natural, cultural and historical heritage for tourism and to enhance a common identity of the Black Sea area, specific strategies, policies and practices should be developed and implemented in the region. Speakers and participants are expected, among other, to examine good practices on sustainable tourism that are already in place and look into best practices from other regions (e.g. Baltic Sea) that could be successfully replicated in the Black Sea Region.

- Social & Cultural linkages
 - Healthcare and Medical Tourism
 - Cultural, Gastronomic and Film Tourism

Social and cultural linkages between the Black Sea countries play a significant role in social cohesion of the region's peoples, its economic growth and provide base for sustainable development. Medical tourism is one of the world's fastest growing sectors, as well as, film and gastronomic tourism, where visitors are increasingly interested in experiencing unique cultures and traditions, something that the Black Sea countries could offer in abundance. IBSS calls to address such issues as regional and national approach to social and cultural tourism development, strategies and assistance to local communities to develop tourism opportunities, etc.

- Youth and inclusive employment in tourism

Through the strengthening of capacity in relevant institutions, the IBSS aims at contributing towards addressing a number of development challenges the Black Sea region facing, such as high levels of unemployment, particularly amongst the youth and disadvantaged social groups, as well as skills gaps in the tourism sector. The importance of increasing the participation rate of youth in the tourism sector of the BSEC countries will be discussed and possible solutions considered.

In this regard, we invite **young professionals** (22-35 years old), such as policy-makers, journalists, diplomats, Members of Parliament, entrepreneurs, civil society leaders and researchers (post docs and PhD candidates) of different backgrounds with expertise in these fields from around the world, to discuss, to exchange views and enhance the dialogue on Tourism perspectives in the Black Sea area. The **three-day intensive course will consist of interactive sessions**, with related reading material provided. Participants are expected to provide an active input into thematic sessions' verbal discussions, as well as drafts of written assignments (if any). ICBSS could make further use of such outcomes in order to produce regional policy recommendations, etc.

How to get involved

Young professionals with proficiency in English are welcome to apply until **8 August 2014**. Registration Fees for participants will be 150 €. Accommodation, breakfast and one meal per day will be offered by the organizers. For more information on the application process please visit

www.icbss.org. All applicants should send their filled application form by e-mail to icbss@icbss.org or by fax to +30 210 324 2244.

Looking forward to seeing you in Athens!