



## Regional Stakeholders Conference

# Black Sea Synergy: the way forward

Thursday 7 November 2019

Athens, Greece

### Background

Launched in 2007, the [Black Sea Synergy initiative](#) aims at supporting regional development through cooperation, in a bottom-up and project-oriented approach.

The key elements of the Black Sea Synergy include building confidence, fostering regional dialogue and achieving tangible results for states and citizens in the region<sup>1</sup>.

In the recent Joint Staff Working Document '[Black Sea Synergy: review of a regional cooperation initiative – period 2015 -2018](#)', the EC and the [European External Action Service \(EEAS\)](#) offer a detailed implementation report, highlighting best practices, lessons learnt and key opportunities for further development.

In a sector-oriented approach, the review identifies a number of cooperation fields with significant progress: blue growth, maritime policy, marine research and innovation, fisheries, environmental protection and climate change, cross-border cooperation and civil society engagement.

Additionally, although less developed at the moment, fields of cooperation such as culture and tourism, education, transport and energy, are acknowledged with great potential for cooperation.

### About the Conference

Within this context, and as a follow-up to the High-Level Conference on BSEC – EU Cooperation (Brussels, 18 June 2019), the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) will organise the **Regional Stakeholders Conference on 'Black Sea Synergy: the way forward'**, in Athens, Greece, on **Thursday 7 November 2019**.

In a bottom-up approach, the event aims to provide a platform for dialogue for stakeholders from EU/MS and non-EU Black Sea countries, to stimulate the discussion on the future of the Black Sea Synergy in the short and medium term.

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<sup>1</sup> The countries covered by the EU's Black Sea Synergy initiative are: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Romania, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine.



Through thematic working groups, special emphasis will be placed on the four fields of cooperation identified with some progress, i.e. **culture and tourism, education, transport and energy**, in order to overcome bottlenecks and maximize their potential.

The **four working groups** will be held in an interactive manner with targeted questions and discussions amongst moderators and participants. In order to facilitate the discussion, background information and targeted questions for each thematic working group will be circulated prior to the Conference.

Specific objectives:

- a) To **assess lessons learnt, opportunities & challenges**, as well as the level of engagement of all relevant stakeholders (government, industry, academia, civil society) in order to strengthen cooperation in these fields;
- b) To **identify and propose concrete ideas and projects** in each cooperation field, to be further pursued by regional stakeholders, in EU programmes and financial instruments, and/or in other national, regional, international funding mechanisms;
- c) To elaborate and **propose policy recommendations** to support a practical, result-oriented intra- and bi- regional cooperation.

The event is organised by the [International Centre for Black Sea Studies \(ICBSS\)](#) within the framework of the [Hellenic BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office](#). The event is co-funded by DG NEAR, within the framework of the ENI East Instrument.

Participation to the Conference is available **only upon registration**. To register, please visit the [online registration platform](#) by 20 October 2019!

For more information you may visit [www.icbss.org](http://www.icbss.org)

***We look forward to welcoming you!***

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