



International High-level Conference

Inter-basin Cooperation on Marine Litter: a focus on the Danube River and the Black Sea

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The **Permanent International Secretariat of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)** and the **International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS)** organised successfully the **International High-level Conference on “Inter-basin Cooperation on Marine Litter: a focus on the Danube River and the Black Sea”**, on Thursday, 4 April 2019, in Sofia, Republic of Bulgaria.

The main objective of the event was to stimulate and facilitate enhanced inter- and intra-regional cooperation at policy, business and research levels, in order to improve the framework conditions and to mitigate obstacles for sustainable marine litter management, focusing on the Danube River and the Black Sea basin.

Welcome speeches were delivered by **H.E. Amb. Michael B. Christides, Secretary General of BSEC PERMIS**, **H.E. Mr. Neno Dimov, Minister of Environment and Water of the Republic of Bulgaria**, **H.E. Mrs. Emilia Kraveva, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria and Bulgarian BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office** and **H.E. Mr. Asaf Hajiyev, Secretary General of PABSEC**. Acknowledging the significance of joint actions in tackling the challenge of marine litter, **H.E. Mr. Karmenu Vella, EU Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries**, provided a short video message.

Keynote speech was delivered by **Mr. Bernhard Friess, Maritime Policy and Blue Economy Director, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries of the European Commission**, who stressed the need -more now than ever- for coordinated and targeted actions in tackling efficiently marine litter.

Thirty speakers, all renowned experts, business- and policy- makers from the Danube and the Black Sea countries, the Mediterranean, the Baltic Sea, and the Atlantic shared their views and best practices in four targeted sessions. The Conference was attended by more than eighty participants, mainly from the Danube and Black Sea countries, representing academia, the industry, NGOs, policy makers and government officials, who had the opportunity to interact, exchange views and network.



The Conference was held within the framework of the **Bulgarian BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office**, with the support of the **Ministry of Environment and Water of the Republic of Bulgaria**, the **European Commission** and the **Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC)**. The event was co-funded under the **Central European Initiative (CEI) Cooperation Fund**.

More information about the event, including photos and the presentations of speakers, will be available soon in www.bsec-organization.org and www.icbss.org.