

Athens, 19 March 2015

ICBSS RTD on “Climate change and environmental strategy for the Black Sea”

Dear Director General,

Honourable guests,

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like first of all to thank ICBSS and in particular, ICBSS Director General, Dr. Dimadama, for their kind invitation to address a welcome note today.

I am pleased to participate at today’s event, one that addresses a very important issue of nowadays, that of environmental policies and the impact of climate change.

The impact of Climate change and the environmental degradation is a matter that affects the countries of the Black Sea region and for that matter, it requires our joint cooperation and common strategy to tackle the issue effectively.

Therefore, I would like to congratulate the ICBSS for taking the initiative to bring together experts and stakeholders from the EU and the BSEC region to discuss the issue from a different point view each.

For the countries of the Black Sea region, an area rich in natural resources, it is a common priority to develop a joint strategy that will follow the environmental needs but also consider the serious impacts of climate change that can influence sustainable development within the region.

Climate change is an on-going process that is expected to carry on at a faster pace in the closest future, so adaptation and mitigation processes should remain in high priority.

Furthermore, it is very important to focus on the understanding of the interdisciplinary nature of such changes. Exploration of roles of the public and private sectors, civil society and intergovernmental organisations can improve significantly the quality of policies and the decision making processes.

From our part, the Hellenic Republic considers environmental policies and the climate change a pivotal issue that needs to be addressed effectively in order to ensure the sustainability of our natural resources and to this end, not to endanger our future. We understand that it is a process that requires multilateral cooperation therefore we have developed an active role within the BSEC Organisation with regards to the environmental strategy.

On this note, I would like once again to congratulate the ICBSS on taking the initiative to address this important issue.

I wish you all a fruitful discussion and a successful event.

Thank you for your attention.