



PRESS RELEASE

Athens, 19 November 2020

ICBSS - BBSC CPMR - HIT CERTH Webinar on “Transport in the Balkans and the Black Sea region”

The International Centre for Black Sea Studies ([ICBSS](#)), the Balkan and Black Sea Commission ([BBSC](#)) of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions ([CPMR](#)), and the Centre for Research and Technology Hellas ([HIT CERTH](#)), co-organised a Webinar on “Transport in the Balkans and the Black Sea region”, on Thursday **19 November 2020**.

The webinar’s objective was to update participants on the latest developments of the *main strategies* that apply in the Balkans and the Black Sea region providing the framework for cooperation in the field of *transport*, understand the contribution of *accessibility to regional development*, and identify the *skills* that will be required in the short- and mid-future by the different sectors of transport.

Under the moderation of **Mr. Lefteris SDOUKOPOULOS**, Associate Researcher at Hellenic Institute of Transport (CERTH/HIT), the prominent speakers and the participants of the event had the opportunity to exchange views on the abovementioned three pillars, on which the webinar focused.

More specifically, the opening remarks of the webinar were delivered by **Mr. Valentin MOLDOVEANU**, Tulcea County Councillor (Romania), Acting President of the Balkan and Black Sea Commission (BBSC) of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), who underlined the importance of a close cooperation in the field of transport in the Balkans, the Danube and the Black Sea region.

During the Session 1 on “*Policies framework in the area*”, **Ms. Mirjana JOVANOVIĆ**, EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) Pillar 2 (Connecting the Region) and EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) Priority Area 1B (Rail-Road-Air Mobility) Coordinator, Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, Republic of Serbia, **Ms. Monica PATRICHI**, EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) Priority Area 1A (Waterways Mobility) Counsellor, Naval Transport Directorate, PA 1A Technical Secretariat, Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure and Communications of Romania, **Ms. Ljuba SILJANOSKA**, Deputy Director, Transport Community Permanent Secretariat, and **Mr. Sergii KRAVCHENKO**, Project Coordinator, Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Permanent International Secretariat (BSEC PERMIS), presented a variety of different cooperation opportunities in the regions of the Adriatic and the Ionian, the Danube, the Balkans and the Black Sea.

Opening the Session 2 dedicated to “*Accessibility as a component for regional development*”, **Mr. Fokion ZAIMIS**, Deputy Governor of Entrepreneurship, Research and Innovation, Region of Western Greece (Greece), CPMR BBSC Member, delivered a speech on “General Aviation and Interconnection of small airports”. Following, **Dr. Afroditi ANAGOSTOPOULOU**, Senior Researcher, Hellenic Institute of Transport (CERTH/HIT) explained the “Digitalisation of freight transport services: a leverage for development in the Balkan area”, **Dr. Sébastien GOULARD**, Consultant at Cooperans, talked about “The Belt and Road Initiative and its meaning for the countries of the Black Sea region and regional

development”, and **Mr. Ionuț MOCANU**, General Manager, Tehnopol Galati Association (Romania), presented the “Galati: a transport hub connecting the Danube and the Black Sea”.

At Session 3 on “*Skills for sustainable regional development*”, **Mr. Malkhaz TORIA**, Acting State Representative in the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti Region (Georgia), CPMR BBSC Member, focused on the skills needed for sustainable regional development in the Black Sea region. In continuation, Assoc. Prof. **Dr. Taner ALBAYRAK**, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences Department of Maritime Business Management Piri Reis University (Turkey), Black Sea Association of Maritime Institutions (BSAMI) underlined the “Innovative Approaches and Cooperation for Sustainable Development”, while **Mr. Alexandros RAMMOS**, Department of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering, National Technical University of Athens (NTUA) (Greece), delivered a presentation on “Advancing the ‘skills ecosystem’ for professionals in Blue Economy – the MENTOR’s legacy and the overview of the Sea of Experience project”.

During Q&A, participants and organisers highlighted important issues for future discussions and next steps. In total, more than 150 participants from the wider region joined the webinar.

The highly attended webinar built on the results of the [Regional Stakeholders Conference “Black Sea Synergy: the way forward”](#) (Athens, 8 November 2019), organised by the ICBSS within the framework of the ENI East Instrument.

This was the fifth of a series of webinars planned by the ICBSS to launch a new era of online meetings on key issues targeting the wider Black Sea region.

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