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Supporting youth entrepreneurship in cultural tourism for coastal communities in the Black Sea Region

Working document

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Aim and background

Youth unemployment and brain drain constitute another latent challenge in the Black Sea region. More and more young people have difficulty being hired and, as a result, many of them choose to migrate. Nevertheless, *“countries of the Black Sea are home to a relatively healthy and well-educated work force compared to global peers. During the last decade, a majority of countries from the wider Black Sea region have improved or sustained their relatively high performance in the World Bank’s Human Capital Index (HCI)”*.¹ In this respect, it is vital to mitigate, or even eradicate-if it is possible- this socio-economic phenomenon.

According to the EU Commission’s Communication on *“A European Strategy for more Growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritime Tourism”*² adopted in 2014, *“half of European coastal tourism’s jobs and value added are located in the Mediterranean, but the Atlantic, Baltic and Black Sea regions have significant shares too. Attracting more than one third of all tourism business in Europe, coastal areas are important for growth and jobs, in particular for young people, since 45% of tourism workers are between 16 and 35 years old”*.

¹ <https://www.mei.edu/publications/challenges-economic-integration-black-sea>

² https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer/maritime-coastal_en,



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Cultural tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing tourism segments worldwide³. More specifically, cultural tourism with maritime dimension plays a significant role in the sector of blue growth for the countries surrounding the Black Sea. Coastal communities can benefit from the rich coastal and underwater cultural heritage, which should be utilized in a sustainable way. In this regard, it is important to know that *“Black Sea littoral states are home to a population of over 302 million people while the population of adjacent countries exceeds 340 million”*⁴ and that *“The Black Sea regions have a permanent population of roughly 17.5 million inhabitants, to which are added 6–8 million tourists per year”*.⁵ Consequently, it signifies that a great number of (young) employees could be occupied. Furthermore, supporting youth entrepreneurship in cultural tourism for coastal communities is one of the main objectives defined in the **Black Sea Common Maritime Agenda**.⁶

This initial paper provides a preliminary overview of the state of play in the geographical area of Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. In addition to this, the paper studies the potentials and opportunities to be further addressed. The paper is elaborated in the framework of the **Project CulTourE4Youth –Supporting Youth entrepreneurship in cultural tourism for coastal communities in the Black Sea Region**⁷, coordinated by the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS), in cooperation with the Balkan and Black Sea Commission (BBSC) of the Conference of the Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR) and the Middle East Technical University Institute of Marine Sciences (METU-IMS). The Project is co-funded by the European Commission under Grant Contract ENI/2020/421-957, coordinated by the BSEC PERMIS within the framework of the Action “Support to the Implementation of the Eastern Partnership Multilateral Dimension, Northern Dimension and Black Sea Synergy”.

The paper will serve as a basis for discussion with local stakeholders -young people aged 18-30, government and funding agencies, local and regional authorities, business operators and training institutions- through a dedicated workshop in the Mersin region (Turkey) that constitutes the project’s case study. Building on the results of the workshop, an online questionnaire will further add on the findings of the preliminary analysis and the first workshop that will be consolidated in a regional stakeholder’s workshop in Batumi (Georgia). The activity will result in a report, a set of recommendations for the target group, including suggesting a list of possible follow-up actions that

³ European Heritage Alliance Manifesto “Cultural Heritage: a powerful Catalyst for the Future of Europe”, May 2020 - <http://europeanheritagealliance.eu/author/alliance/>

⁴ <https://www.mei.edu/publications/challenges-economic-integration-black-sea>

⁵ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321293684_Black_Sea_Coastal_Population

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/international-cooperation/black-sea_en

⁷ <https://icbss.org/cultoure4youth-project/>

business owners and employers could pursue to promote youth entrepreneurship in the coastal communities of Mersin and Adana (Turkey) and Ajara (Georgia).

Current status and features

At regional level, the Black Sea countries acknowledge the importance of sustainable blue economy, especially as a sustainable and environmentally friendly growth generator, as stated in the **Black Sea Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA)**⁸ and the **Common Maritime Agenda (CMA)**⁹.

Particularly amidst regional challenges that may hamper the socioeconomic development, such as regional tensions or the unexpected pandemic outbreak, *“the countries agreed that the common maritime agenda provides the right framework for the Black Sea region to ‘build back better’ based on its blue economy potential, the opportunities of digitalisation and, above all, a smart and sustainable approach”*.¹⁰

Thus, the blue economy will be used as a fundamental tool in order to make progress in the region.

At national level, the targeted countries adopt policies and implement national programmes to support youth entrepreneurship and cultural tourism:

- **Turkey:** An analysis of practices and trends deployed internationally shows that entrepreneurship has an increasingly important place in development strategies. Based on the changing conditions and needs, “Turkey Entrepreneurship Strategy and Action Plan (GISEP)” has been developed as a roadmap (GISEP, 2015)¹¹ in order to spread the entrepreneurship culture, create a strong ecosystem and develop entrepreneurship. The strategic plan that was developed by the Entrepreneurship Council under the coordination of Small and Medium Industry Development Organization (KOSGEB) has solid objectives and actions covering the development and implementation of sustainable support system in both general areas and priority thematic areas such as women entrepreneurship and youth entrepreneurship as well as facilitating access to finance for entrepreneurs. Although direct actions considering tourism are not included in the entrepreneurship strategy, it points out the “2023 Tourism Strategy Plan” in related policy documents and entrepreneurship support areas. Ministry of Culture and Tourism 2019-2023

⁸ http://connect2blacksea.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Black_Sea_SRIA_Final.pdf

⁹ <http://www.bsec-bsvkc.org/UploadedDocuments/Annex%201%20-%20Common%20Maritime%20Agenda%20for%20the%20Black%20Sea.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/mare/items/698185>

¹¹ https://www.kosgeb.gov.tr/Content/Upload/Dosya/Mali%20Tablolar/Gisep_2015-2018_TR.pdf

Strategic Document¹² includes several areas such as regulatory framework, innovation, thematic and general supports, access to finance. Yet entrepreneurship culture, education and consultancy areas concerning tourism are not covered in depth. As regards the implementation part, the relevant municipalities and chambers have organized training activities for both professionals working in the tourism sector and entrepreneurs in the field of tourism entrepreneurship (as Cultural Heritage and Tourism Association Training (KUMTEP, 2021)¹³ or Tourism Entrepreneurship Training (CKA, 2021)¹⁴). However, such targeted training activities and thematic support mechanisms do not exist in and for the marine and maritime field. Overall, although Turkey has a promising and developing entrepreneurship ecosystem supported by national and international mechanisms, it is comprehensible that sustainable cultural tourism and youth entrepreneurship are slowly emerging in the recent years, and they have not been placed as a high priority in the near-future strategies and plans.

- **Azerbaijan:** During the last two decades, the Republic of Azerbaijan implements various programs with the purpose to encourage youth entrepreneurship. Young farmers and, generally, youth dwelling in border and mountainous areas constitute one of the priorities of the state. The program “Azerbaijani Youth” for 2017-2021 has the aim to promote small and medium-sized enterprises¹⁵ and it has created the framework within many training projects has been carried out.¹⁶ However, “*a comprehensive SME strategy has yet to be adopted*”.¹⁷ Furthermore, the country has the ambition to support the tourism businesses taking into account the importance of cultural heritage. In this context, the role of cultural diplomacy is determining, because of Azerbaijan’s location (“*among Europe, Middle East, Russia and Asia*”)¹⁸ and role in the development of the Silk Roads. “*The goods and products of Azerbaijani towns and settlements spread along the Silk Roads and its towns had long been known to act as centres of culture, science and education. Bilateral land and sea routes linked Azerbaijan with China, Syria, India, Asia Minor, Iran, Egypt, Russia, the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa and Europe*”¹⁹. Two years ago, the country participated in the first UNESCO Regional Meeting on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage in the Caspian Sea region for the purpose of “*fostering*

¹² <https://www.ktb.gov.tr/Eklenti/67667,ktb20192023stratejikplani23mbpdf.pdf?0>

¹³ <https://www.tarihiKentlerBirligi.org/tkb-kulturel-miras-ve-turizm-egitimleri-2021-bahar-donemi/>

¹⁴ <https://www.cka.org.tr/tr/duyuru/turizm-girisimciligi-egitim-programi>

¹⁵ https://eap-csf.eu/wp-content/uploads/YOUTH_ENTREPRENEURSHIP_IN_EAP_THE_WAY_FORWARD.pdf

¹⁶ <http://ja-azerbaijan.org/youth-entrepreneurship-program/>

¹⁷ https://eap-csf.eu/wp-content/uploads/YOUTH_ENTREPRENEURSHIP_IN_EAP_THE_WAY_FORWARD.pdf

¹⁸ <http://creative.az/files/2/pdf/180315%20Creative%20Industries%20Report%20for%20Azerbaijan.pdf>

¹⁹ <https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/countries-alongside-silk-road-routes/azerbaijan>

cooperation” in this sector.²⁰ Nevertheless, a national policy, which will be more comprehensive, is demanded.²¹

- **Georgia:** The Georgian Youth Policy does not include provisions which foster youth entrepreneurship. However, the Economic Development Strategy “Georgia 2020” emphasizes “entrepreneurial skills of pupils and students studying in educational institutions, especially in vocational training schools/centers”, while the Rural Development Strategy 2017-2020 has the objective to “raise awareness in innovation and entrepreneurship. In addition, the promotion of cooperation through contributing to the skills development and employment issues (especially for young people and women)”.²² In this regard, educational and training activities, such as business boot camps²³ and the Regional Youth Entrepreneurship Program²⁴, take place in order to connect (rural) youth with the sustainable entrepreneurial world. As regards the cultural tourism, the country has developed the “Georgian Tourism Strategy 2015 – 2025”²⁵. The aim of its capacity-building programs is to empower Georgian cultural heritage in the international tourism market in a sustainable way²⁶. For that reason, the mobile application “Cultural Routes of Georgia”, which informs the tourists about the cultural heritage, has been created.²⁷ It is worth mentioning that Kutaisi City Municipality took part in the organisation of the 10th Annual Advisory Forum on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe²⁸, which paid attention to resilience and sustainability in the post COVID-19 era. Moreover, four natural monuments/protected areas preserving wetlands and rainforests recently joined the UNESCO World Heritage List for the first time in history of Georgia.²⁹ This fact could be a new beginning for the adoption of innovative policies concerning eco-cultural tourism.

²⁰ http://www.unesco.org/en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=156&language=en

²¹ <http://creative.org/az/files/2/pdf/180315%20Creative%20Industries%20Report%20for%20Azerbaijan.pdf>

²² https://eap-csf.eu/wp-content/uploads/YOUTH_ENTREPRENEURSHIP_IN_EAP_THE_WAY_FORWARD.pdf

²³ <https://www.ge.undp.org/content/georgia/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2020/enpard-rural-youth-bootcamps.html>

²⁴ <https://rdfg.ge/what-we-do/usaid-zrda-regional-youth-entrepreneurship-program/>

²⁵ <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/policy-monitoring-platform/developing-cultural-tourism>

²⁶

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348153443_Cultural_Tourism_in_Georgia_Opportunities_at_Global_and_Local_Levels

²⁷ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/-/georgia-memorandum-of-understanding-with-the-national-tourism-administration-and-two-new-certified-cultural-routes-of-georgia->

²⁸ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/2021-kutaisi-forum>

²⁹ <https://agenda.ge/en/news/2021/2111>

- Republic of Moldova:** The National Program of Youth Economic Empowerment has the aim to *“promote and facilitate youth involvement in entrepreneurship activity, by providing financial support”*³⁰, especially in rural areas. It focuses on agriculture, manufacturing and services business through capacity-building activities and accessing financial resources. Furthermore, both the Organization for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Development (ODIMM) and the Network of Business Incubators try to foster youth entrepreneurship³¹, although the economic problems constitute a stable impediment. In this context, the EU4Youth project³² objects to promote the young social entrepreneurs as a rising sector. In regards to the cultural tourism, Moldova participates in the Danube Region Strategy³³ with the aim to promote its cultural heritage and to develop this kind of tourism in a sustainable and “green” way. Emphasis is put notably on the sector of wine experience tourism. Needless to say, the title of “Sustainable Cultural Tourism Destination in 2020” to the Wine Routes of Moldova confirms this policy³⁴. In addition, even though Moldova is landlocked, the country takes part in policies related to coastal and maritime tourism in the Black Sea Basin. The project “TREASURE” (underwater archaeological research, cultural tourism) is a relevant example³⁵.
- Ukraine:** During the last years, youth entrepreneurship is defined by the Concept State Target Social Program “Youth of Ukraine” for 2016-2020 *“with the purpose of promoting the development of youth entrepreneurship, self-employment and effective advancement of young people in entrepreneurial environment”*³⁶. Moreover, there is the National SME Strategy 2020³⁷ aiming to empower young people’s entrepreneurial skills while the Ukrainian state participates in the EU4Youth project, which we have already mentioned. In addition to this, Ukraine participates in the Danube Region Strategy (Odessa is the Ukrainian coastal region joining the EUSDR) in order to protect its cultural heritage and to support its cultural tourism. It is worth noting that Ukraine will be the first non-EU member state to hold the EUSDR Presidency from

³⁰ https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Moldova_2011_Youth_Policy_Review.pdf

³¹ https://eap-csf.eu/wp-content/uploads/YOUTH_ENTREPRENEURSHIP_IN_EAP_THE_WAY_FORWARD.pdf

³² <https://www.euneighbours.eu/en/east/stay-informed/projects/eu4youth-unlocking-potential-young-social-entrepreneurs-moldova-and>

³³ <https://rm.coe.int/routes4u-manual-attractiveness-remote-destination-cultural-tourism/16809ef75a%0A%0A>

³⁴ <https://antrim.md/2020/10/05/wine-routes-of-moldova-awarded-as-a-sustainable-cultural-tourism-destination-in-2020-by-the-european-cultural-tourism-network/>

³⁵ https://blacksea-cbc.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/BSB371_project-factsheet_v2.pdf

³⁶ https://eap-csf.eu/wp-content/uploads/YOUTH_ENTREPRENEURSHIP_IN_EAP_THE_WAY_FORWARD.pdf

³⁷ https://eap-csf.eu/wp-content/uploads/YOUTH_ENTREPRENEURSHIP_IN_EAP_THE_WAY_FORWARD.pdf

November 2021 to November 2022³⁸. However, the country has to deal with a significant number of difficulties due to the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. Political, legal and financial instability have affected (cultural) tourism gravely.³⁹ Furthermore, it is important to bear in mind that these conflicts prevent all “*experts and researchers*” from conducting studies on cultural heritage on these grounds.⁴⁰

Youth entrepreneurship and (coastal) cultural tourism: state of play

As we have already discussed, each country has developed its own policies on youth entrepreneurship and cultural tourism separately. In addition to these policies, there are several projects and activities trying to combine the abovementioned sectors.

First of all, the European Union funds the project “Supporting Community-Focused Tourism Initiatives as Rural Development Strategies” with the purpose of “*supporting development of at least 500 SMEs in rural areas, as well as at increasing the employability of young people interested in tourism sector*”⁴¹ in Azerbaijan. In this context, the EU makes efforts to strengthen sectors, such as agriculture and agritourism⁴². Moreover, a labor fair aiming at including young entrepreneurs in tourism took place successfully two years ago⁴³ highlighting the need for a more inclusive market.

As for Georgia, more and more young people abandon their homelands in order to find a job in an urban area. For that reason, activities, such as ADB’s Livable Urban Areas project, place emphasis on active youth participation in the wider tourism sector (cultural heritage, culinary heritage, agritourism, etc.). Sustainability constitutes a crucial element in this policy.⁴⁴ In line with this goal, Youth Entrepreneurship Education in Hospitality and Tourism project launched three years ago “*providing non-formal training to youngsters that enables them to identify and develop small businesses that make use of the touristic potential of their community*”⁴⁵. Ukraine engaged in this capacity building program, too. Similarly to

³⁸ <https://danube-region.eu/ukraine-to-be-the-first-non-eu-member-state-to-chair-eu-strategy-for-danube-region-eusdr-in-2022/>

³⁹ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339318793_The_Prospects_of_the_marine_and_coastal_tourism_development_in_Ukraine

⁴⁰ https://www.euneighbours.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2020-03/Subsector_report_Ua_english_Fin.pdf

⁴¹ https://eap-csf.eu/wp-content/uploads/YOUTH_ENTREPRENEURSHIP_IN_EAP_THE_WAY_FORWARD.pdf

⁴² https://www.euneighbours.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2020-05/eu_regional_dev_brochure_2020_en_3.pdf

⁴³ <https://www.azernews.az/travel/148917.html>

⁴⁴ <https://blogs.adb.org/blog/tourism-georgian-youth-s-big-hope-future>

⁴⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplu-project-details/#project/602753-EPP-1-2018-1-GE-EPPKA2-CBY-EP-PE>

Georgia, the Ukrainian state faces the socio-economic phenomenon of youth migration to industrial cities. In addition to this, its tourism is threatened by the political crisis which we have already referred to. Taking into account these specificities, two models of tourism development-with the presence of youth- are proposed during the last years. The rural green tourism, which is *"a means for the reproduction and conservation of the natural resource potential of the regions of Ukraine"*⁴⁶, and the marine and coastal tourism due to *"Ukraine's diversified water resources and basic infrastructure"*⁴⁷.

As regards Turkey, in spite of its miscellaneous policies *"supporting young entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sectors"*⁴⁸, a specific agenda concerning youth entrepreneurship in (coastal) cultural tourism has not been created yet. The lack of this agenda characterizes Moldovan state's policy, too.

Consequently, it is comprehensible that, even though the aforementioned countries have adopted many strategies with the aim of promoting both youth entrepreneurship and cultural tourism, the majority of them don't connect the two sectors. Youth participation in coastal cultural tourism is discussed even more rarely. For that reason, it is vital to examine the rising potentials via young entrepreneurs' contribution to (coastal) cultural tourism.

Supporting youth entrepreneurship in cultural tourism for coastal communities: opportunities and potential

– Modern (Maritime) Silk Road

A good example of regional tourism with a direct impact on national economic development is the modern Silk Road. The ancient Silk Road was the first trade route which brought together the East and the West not only on a commercial level, but also on a level of cultural exchange. It *"served as a vehicle for the fruitful exchange of arts, religion, cultures, ideas and technology"*⁴⁹. Nowadays, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) aims to revive these Silk Road Heritage Corridors and tourism growth will be the crucial factor. As a result, economic advantages and intercultural relations will be developed among the affiliate countries. Moreover, it is important to know that the underwater cultural heritage

⁴⁶https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342451048_Youth_Entrepreneurial_Activity_in_the_Development_of_Rural_Green_Tourism_the_Case_of_Ukraine

⁴⁷https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339318793_The_Prospects_of_the_marine_and_coastal_tourism_development_in_Ukraine

⁴⁸<https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/chapters/turkey/86-developing-entrepreneurial-skills-through-culture>

⁴⁹<https://www.unwto.org/silk-road>

(shipwrecks, submerged cities, ports and objects) along the maritime Silk Road⁵⁰ is affluent and it should be included in the new tourism strategy.

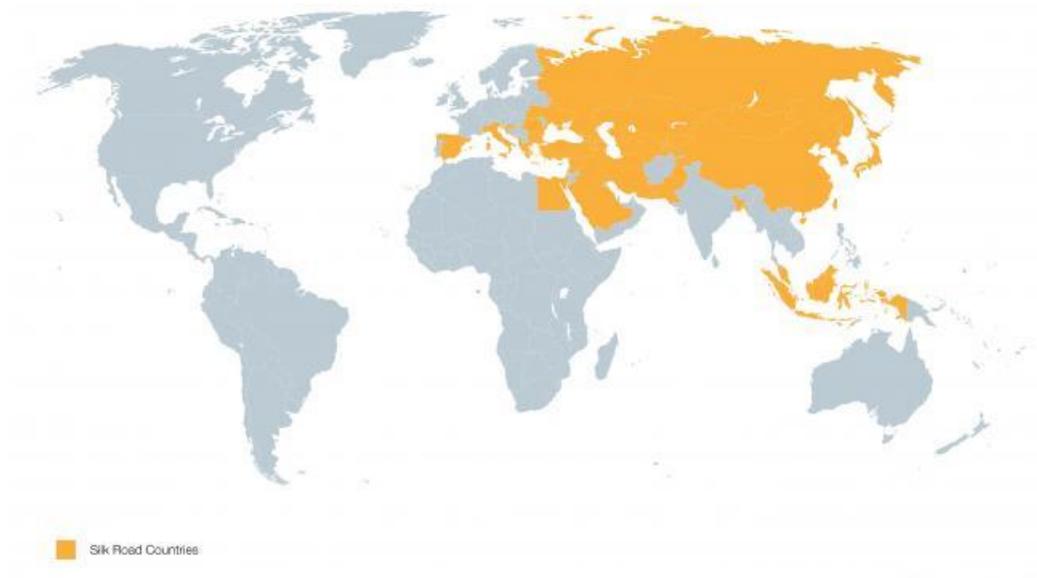


Figure 1. The Silk Road Countries <https://www.unwto.org/silk-road>

As noted, the Black Sea region constitutes a pivotal part of the Silk Road. Therefore, its cultural tourism will be promoted through the Silk Road tourism project. On the one hand, it means that the (underwater) cultural heritage of the Black Sea basin will be protected and widely advertised. On the other hand, the local communities could benefit from the arising profits and improve their standard of living. Under these circumstances, youth entrepreneurship could flourish based on new opportunities which have been created through this project. It is necessary to support young entrepreneurs' innovative ideas which will empower the Silk Road tourism and provide benefits to their homelands.

– Diversification and Job Creation

Another aspect of the importance to support youth entrepreneurship in cultural tourism is the generation of jobs. As noted before, brain drain (Human Capital Flight) is an existing challenge for the Black Sea countries. In this regard, the role of cultural tourism could be decisive in order to reverse this

⁵⁰ <https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/silk-road-themes/underwater-heritage>

situation. Highly educated and skilled people in fields, such as culture, tourism, business management, environmentalism etc., will be able to apply their knowledge and, maybe, their experience to creative and pioneering projects related to youth entrepreneurship. It is also undoubtable that the increase of these enterprises will boost youth employability broadly. Moreover, countries should put emphasis on coastal communities which constitute the connecting link with the Black Sea and are characterized by rich natural and cultural heritage. Except for sun, sea and sand tourism (“3S tourism”, characterized by seasonality), cultural tourism can contribute to coastal communities in terms of jobs, economic gains and popularity. In this context, diversification across other (all-year-round) activities and sectors will become a key element in order to reduce brain drain. Particularly, entrepreneurs and employees, who don’t profit from their work anymore, will have the opportunity to bounce back through coastal and maritime cultural tourism. For example:

- Diving Tourism. Divers guide tourists around the underwater natural and cultural monuments (e.g. underwater archaeological museums, diving parks, ancient harbours). Technology can play a significant role in order to promote innovation in the local diving industry and to advertise the Underwater Natural and Cultural Routes.
- Nautical Routes, such as the MELTEMI project⁵¹, which focuses on water sports and nautical tourism in the NE Aegean between Greece and Turkey.
- Traditional Shipbuilding. For example, the small “taka” boat is part of this tradition in the Black Sea basin. Also, the use of digital technologies could be a tool for workers in order to improve traditional shipbuilding.
- Pesca-tourism⁵². Local fishers and tourists have a day trip joining different fishing activities.
- Gastronomy. Tourists obtain knowledge about the culinary heritage via the process of cooking with locals. In this context, it is important to emphasize the “farm-to-fork”⁵³ approach; local ingredients produced in a healthy and eco-friendly way. This activity can be in connection with pesca-tourism.
- Athletic/Youth events, such as the Mediterranean Games⁵⁴. Athletes who come from countries bordering the Black Sea will be able to take part in these events.

⁵¹ <https://aegeanmeltemi.com/>

⁵² https://www.wfmmi.org/what_we_do/fisheries/transforming_small_scale_fisheries/sustainable_fishing_tourism/

⁵³ https://tourismmanifesto.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Manifesto-Paper_Investment-proposals-and-reforms_Travel-and-Tourism_final.pdf

⁵⁴ <https://cijm.org.gr/mediterranean-games/>

- Cycling Tourism. This kind of tourism has reduced environmental impact and could connect the whole Black Sea region. The MEDCYCLETOUR⁵⁵ project is a relevant example. Also, guided tours can be organized by locals along the (coastal) cycle routes.
- Cultural/Historical/Archaeological/Religious/Artistic Routes. Locals, whose specializations relate with these fields or they are just keen on them, could work as tour guides in order to demonstrate the coastal and maritime richness of their communities.

Needless to say, all these projects must be sustainable-oriented. Coastal/marine pollution and overexploitation of natural/cultural resources have to be strictly avoided. Furthermore, the status of Marine Protected Areas [*Any area of the intertidal or subtidal terrain, together with its overlying water and associated flora, fauna, historical and cultural features, which has been reserved by law or other effective means to protect part or all of the enclosed environment (IUCN,1994)*] should be respected.

Moreover, it is important to take into consideration that many documents have been adopted in order to boost the economy through the fields of culture and tourism:

- **Mission Starfish 2030**

According to the Mission Starfish 2030⁵⁶, the Mission's objectives can be achieved *"through the active cooperation with and co-ownership by all public authorities involved in the Mission's implementation, notably by:[...]Using local cultural traditions and art as a means to build local visions of new economies, social contracts and community identities and to inspire and empower people and local communities[...]"*

- **Cultural and Creative Regional Ecosystems (CCRE-S3)⁵⁷**

The CCRE-S3 partnership, under the Industrial Modernisation Platform of the Smart Specialisation Platform of the European Commission, aims to stimulate new insights and opportunities related to cultural and creative experiences for local communities and residents by involving several groups of professions that use, apply and implement new technologies (including digital forms) within the Cultural and Creative Industries sector, such as creative entrepreneurs and cultural heritage professionals, as well as traditional shipbuilders, maritime archaeologists etc. The partnership is both policies and projects-oriented and open to the countries covered by CulTourE4Youth.

- **European Pact for Skills⁵⁸**

⁵⁵ <https://medcycletour.interreg-med.eu/>

⁵⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/mission-starfish-2030-restore-our-ocean-and-waters_en

⁵⁷ <https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/cultural-and-creative-regional-ecosystems>

⁵⁸ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1517&langId=en>

The European Commission has launched this Pact for Skills, “a shared engagement model for skills development. The Commission invites public and private organisations to join forces and take concrete action to upskill and reskill people in Europe”. Culture and tourism are parts of this innovative program.

– Environmental sustainability

As might be expected, all these proposals are intimately intertwined with the concept of sustainability. In 2021, it is obvious that Earth is in danger and every single person has the obligation to act carefully. After all, climate change is a serious growing problem, which has cross-border impact. In this regard, Europe’s coastal communities are threatened by sea level rise, extreme weather events (frequent floods, storms, avalanches, landslides, ground destabilization) and coastal erosion⁵⁹. For that reason, youth entrepreneurship in cultural tourism should be identical to sustainable and innovative ideas, which will make a difference and mitigate this increased risk. Activities, such as the trawling fishing threatening the preservation of underwater cultural heritage⁶⁰, must be replaced by environmentally friendly methods and strategies.

According to the European Tourism Manifesto⁶¹ and the example of delivery model “Modern and creative hubs of sustainability by fostering climate change adaptation of fragile ecosystems”, the main objectives are: 1) *Development, renovation and environmental transformation of coastal and inland marinas for recreational boats (such as new berth space where required, renewable energy installations, power storage, waste disposal facilities, small-scale local desalination, climate change adaptation)*. 2) *Development, renovation and environmental transformation of inland waterway infrastructure for recreational boating and water sport uses (such as locks, marinas, docks, slipways, etc.)*. 3) *Roll-out of eco-friendly permanent mooring solutions for recreational boats in protected areas*.

Other Regional examples

In light of the overall approach proposed, it is important to take into account other regional examples from different sea basins. Below two examples of cultural tourism in the European Union macro-regions⁶²:

⁵⁹ [file:///C:/Users/USER/Desktop/KI0220682ENN.en%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/USER/Desktop/KI0220682ENN.en%20(1).pdf)

⁶⁰ http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/pdf/UCH_S2_Brennan.pdf

⁶¹ https://tourismmanifesto.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Manifesto-Paper_Investment-proposals-and-reforms_Travel-and-Tourism_final.pdf

⁶² <https://rm.coe.int/routes4u-manual-attractiveness-remote-destination-cultural-tourism/16809ef75a%0A%0A>

- **The Baltic Sea Region.** It was the first case for which a macro-regional strategy was adopted. This “*almost entirely enclosed marine region*” has many “*environmental, economic and social challenges*” to confront. The EU Strategy aims at “*saving the Baltic Sea, connecting the region and increasing prosperity*”. On this basis, the policy area includes the sectors of culture and tourism in order to achieve prosperity.
- **The Adriatic and Ionian Region.** This area is composed of “*very heterogeneous countries in terms not only of geographic area but also of socio-economic development*”. There is “*a wide linguistic and cultural diversity, but the culture of the Mediterranean lifestyle connects the entire region*”. The objectives of the EU Strategy are “*marine and maritime growth (“blue growth”), connecting the region, environmental quality and sustainable tourism*”. Culture, tourism, sustainability and diversification constitute vital factors of the field of action.

Furthermore, both Strategies focus on the role of Cultural Routes in macro-regions. The importance of cultural tourism for the purpose of supporting opportunities for alternative employment of young people is indubitable.

Examining these cases, it is comprehensible that a relevant Strategy should also be developed for the Black Sea Region. The above fields of policy are compatible with the needs of the area so as to overcome its difficulties. Apart from that, the objectives of these EU Strategies are closely related to the goals of the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea⁶³:

- *Healthy marine and coastal ecosystems.*
- *A competitive, innovative and sustainable blue economy for the Black Sea.*
- *Fostering Investment in the Black Sea blue economy.*

In conclusion, youth entrepreneurship and cultural tourism can become correlative in order to empower both economy and cultural heritage in the wider region. Coastal communities will have a significant role in this project due to their geographic location and cultural heritage. The capitalization of existing resources, national and regional tools and policies provide the countries with valuable opportunity to mitigate-or even eliminate- many socio-economic, cultural and environmental challenges.

⁶³ https://blackseablueeconomy.eu/sites/default/files/annex-1-common-maritime-agenda-for-black-sea_enpdf_2_0.pdf