



PRESS RELEASE

Athens, 4 November 2021

SEArica online Conference on

“Marine Litter in the Danube and the Black Sea region: concrete proposals from the regions”

hosted by MEP Ms. Carmen AVRAM

Thursday 4 November 2021

The International Centre for Black Sea Studies ([ICBSS](#)) co-organised together with the **Balkan and Black Sea Commission (BBSC)** of the **Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)** which holds the secretariat of the **Seas, Rivers, Islands and Coastal Areas (SEArica)** Intergroup, the online Conference entitled “**Marine Litter in the Danube and the Black Sea region: concrete proposals from the regions**”, on Thursday 4 November 2021.

The webinar’s aim was to provide a dialogue platform amongst EU, key regional, political, and private stakeholders from the Danube and Black Sea regions, regarding the crucial topic of marine litter, by discussing tailored and *concrete proposals* to tackle the phenomenon in the region, as well as to promote inter-basin and *knowledge exchange* by presenting key takeaways and *best practices* from other sea basins of Europe. Therefore, the webinar offered to different stakeholders from the wider Black Sea region and beyond the opportunity to share their experience and *exchange ideas* with representatives from the European institutions and encourage *multi-lateral cooperation* in the framework of different EU initiatives and programmes implemented in the area.

The online conference was divided in four parts and was hosted by **MEP Carmen AVRAM**, Member of the European Parliament, Vice-Chair of the SEArica Intergroup, responsible for the Danube and the Black Sea, who addressed a welcome speech.

During the webinar’s first part, the prominent speakers presented an overview on the **regional mechanisms and perspectives** from the regions. More specifically, **Mr Ivan ZAVADSKY**, Executive Secretary of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) talked about *Danube Day*, **Ms Irina MAKARENKO**, Pollution Monitoring and Assessment Officer, Permanent Secretariat, Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (Black Sea Commission) elaborated on the *International Black Sea Action Day*, **Mr Yunus Emre ÖZIGCI**, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Turkey), presented the *Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea* by the 2021 Turkish Coordination, **Professor Dr Baris SALIHOGLU**, [Black Sea CONNECT Project](#) Coordinator, Middle East Technical University - Institute of Marine Sciences (METU-IMS, Turkey) analysed the activities within the *Black Sea Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA)*, **Professor Ioannis KALAVROUZOTIS**, President of the Regional Council of Research & Innovation of the Region of Western Greece (CPMR BBSC Member) underlined the *Safe use of Waste and Environmental Protection*, **Ms Yolanda SCHMAL**, Policy Advisor on European Affairs and Circular Economy, on behalf of Ms Zita PELS, Regional Minister from Noord-Holland (The Netherlands), Member of the CPMR North Sea Commission highlighted the Inter-basin best practice exchange: Reflections and future steps based on the

results of the [CPMR North Sea Commission's "Waste Free Rivers" event](#), Ms Olga MASHKINA, EU4 Ocean Coordinator, ACTeon (France) spoke about the [EU4Ocean coalition](#), and Mr Bernard MERKX, Co-founder, Waste Free Oceans closed the session with the presentation of the *Tech solutions from the private sector*.

At the second part of the webinar, dedicated to [skills for prevention of marine litter](#), Professor Dr Taner ALBAYRAK, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences Department of Maritime Business Management, Piri Reis University (Turkey), referred to *Black Sea Association of Maritime Institutions (BSAMI)* activities, and Mr Dennis BRENNECKE, Scientist at Kiel Science Factory (Germany) described the [Plastic Pirates citizen science project](#).

During the third part, the prominent speakers presented [regional projects](#) from the Danube and the Black Sea region: the Transnational River Cleanup Handguide – how a Hungarian trash boat race went viral, was presented by the representative of [PLASTIC Cup](#) initiative, Mr Gary HANKÓ, Project Manager, and Managing Director of the Hungarian Association of Environmental Enterprises; the [BLACK SEA REACT! Project](#) by Ms Georgia CHANTZI, Research and Policy Development Manager, International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS), the [EU/UNDP Project 'EU4EMBLAS'](#) by Ms Maria POGOJEVA, Marine Litter Expert. Moreover, [Black Sea Young Ambassadors](#) were represented by Ms Gizem AKKUS, Ph.D. Candidate at Middle East Technical University - Institute of Marine Sciences (METU-IMS, Turkey).

At the last part, high-level officials shared their experiences for the topics discussed and intervened with their [reactions](#). Firstly, *HORIZON Ocean, Seas and Waters Mission and lighthouse projects* were presented by Ms Roberta ZOBBI, Senior Expert - Maritime Policy - Research and Innovation, Maritime innovation, Marine Knowledge and Investment Unit, Maritime Policy and Blue Economy, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), European Commission. Ms. Zobbi's speech was followed by the speeches of Mr Michail Georgios PAPADOYANNAKIS, Senior Expert, Marine Environment and Water Industry Unit, Directorate-General for Environment (DG ENV), European Commission, Ms Michaela HAUF, Team Leader - sector connectivity, energy efficiency, environment and climate change, Neighbourhood East and Institution Building - Georgia, Moldova, Economic Investment Plan Unit, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), European Commission, Mr Balázs HORVÁTH, EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) Priority Area 4 (Water Quality) Coordinator, General Directorate of Water Management, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Hungary), Ms Laura BOBARNAC, Head of Unit of the Directorate MA European Territorial Cooperation Programmes, Managing Authority, ENI CBC Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme 2014-2020, Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration (Romania), who closed the fourth part of the webinar.

The online event was closed with an open discussion, in which Dr. George TRIANTAPHYLLIDIS (HCMR) and Mr. Mamuka GVILAVA (ICZM NFP) took the floor and shared their own experiences by exchanging ideas.

The closing remarks were delivered by MEP Carmen Avram's accredited assistant, Mr. Sabin CIORNEA, who moderated the webinar.

This was third SEArca Conference on the Black Sea, co-organised by ICBSS & CPMR BBSC. For previous ICBSS webinars, visit <https://icbss.org/webinars/>.

Watch the full webinar [HERE](#).

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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.