



PRESS RELEASE

Athens, 25 November 2022

## 12<sup>th</sup> International Black Sea Symposium

# 30 Years of Black Sea Economic Cooperation

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The 12<sup>th</sup> International Black Sea Symposium “30 Years of Black Sea Economic Cooperation” was held successfully in Athens, on 22 November 2022, organised by the **International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS)**.

On the occasion of the **30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the BSEC Organisation**, and amidst immense regional developments, the 12<sup>th</sup> IBSS served as a hub for sixty regional and international stakeholders to reflect on the role of BSEC as a pivotal regional and international actor and exchange views on its priorities for the years to come.

Opening the Symposium, **ICBSS Director General, Mr. Georgios Mitrakos**, stressed the significant role of BSEC Organisation as the most representative and inclusive institutional form of cooperation among the countries of the Black Sea region, contributing to confidence building and growth. Mr. Mitrakos highlighted also the role of ICBSS, as a BSEC related body, in promoting mutual understanding and cooperation in the region through knowledge and dialogue.

Keynote speech was delivered by the **Secretary General of the BSEC Organisation, H.E. Ambassador Lazăr COMĂNESCU** who made an extensive overview of the history of the Organisation in its 30 years of existence. Ambassador Comănescu placed emphasis on the importance of BSEC and its contribution to cooperation in the wider Black Sea area.

Three interactive sessions served as a means to unfold the discussion focusing on i) 30 years of regional cooperation – challenges and future perspectives, that reflected on the role of BSEC throughout the years, proposed key structural changes and identified priorities for the future; ii) BSEC region as a cross-road of East and West, that hosted representatives of regional organisations to present successful synergies with BSEC; iii) Milestones and good practices of regional cooperation, that highlighted best practices and milestones in the 30-year course of the Organisation in various thematic topics.

Among the distinguished participants of the 12<sup>th</sup> IBSS were the Secretary General of PABSEC, Mr. Asaf HAJIYEV, the Deputy Secretary General of PABSEC, Mr. Miltiadis MAKRYGIANNIS,

the Vice President Finance of the BSTDB, Mr. Valeriy PIATNYTSKYI, the f. Secretary General of BSEC PERMIS, Amb. Michael B. CHRISTIDES, the f. ICBSS Director General, Prof. Dr. Yiannis PAPANICOLAOU, as well as policy-makers, researchers, representatives of academia, business, civil society and international organisations.

Back-to-back with the 12th IBSS, the ICBSS and BSEC PERMIS co-organised the Conference **“Strengthening the project implementation capacity, dialogue and cooperation in the Black Sea Region”** (Athens, Wednesday 23 November 2022), that was held in the framework of the regional projects Black Sea React!, Black Sea Cruise and CulTourE4Youth, coordinated by BSEC PERMIS and ICBSS.

The event hosted sixty regional and international experts who presented the results and applications developed under the three projects and proposed concrete ideas for future partnerships in pertinent blue economy sectors, such as culture, tourism, small-scale boating, and marine litter.

The events were co-funded by the European Commission under Grant Contract ENI/2020/421-957.

For more information, please visit <https://icbss.org/>

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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 Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and its 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 of fostering multilateral cooperation among the BSEC member states as well as with their international partners.

Director General: Mr. Georgios Mitrakos