



PRESS RELEASE

Athens, 18 March 2025

Participation of ICBSS Director General at the “Budapest Balkans Forum 2025”

On 13 - 14 March 2025, the ICBSS Director General, Mr. Georgios MITRAKOS, participated at the “**Budapest Balkans Forum 2025**”, organised by the **Hungarian Institute of International Affairs (HIIA)** and financially supported by the **International Visegrad Fund**, in Budapest, Hungary.

Bringing together more than 100 experts, decision and policy-makers from around the world, the two-day conference aimed at sharing the Visegrad perspective and experience on key issues, including the impact of the war in Ukraine on the region, bilateral disputes, the prospects of EU enlargement and the strategic importance of the Western Balkans for the Visegrad countries.

On behalf of ICBSS, Director General, Mr. Georgios MITRAKOS, participated as discussant at a debate following the panel “**Markets and Momentum: Mapping Investment Opportunities in the Western Balkans in cooperation with HEPA – Hungarian Export Promotion Agency**”, where he emphasized the importance of resolving the remaining bilateral issues in the Western Balkans, building on the Prespes Agreement legacy, in order to accelerate the accession process of all the countries of the Western Balkans region.

The ICBSS congratulates the organisers and all participants of this flagship event for creating a platform for dialogue between academics, research institutions and policy makers to discuss and evaluate present and future trends affecting the region, to positively influence policy making and to strengthen new means of cooperation among experts, and especially thanks the HIIA for the warm hospitality extended to the participants of the event.

The visit is in line with ICBSS objectives to promote dialogue, knowledge exchange and enable partnerships to advance sustainability and development in the wider Black Sea region and beyond.

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

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

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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.