



PRESS RELEASE

Athens, 25 September 2025

Cooperation between the ICBSS and the Bulgarian Diplomatic Institute

On 23 – 24 September 2025, upon the kind invitation of the Bulgarian Diplomatic Institute, the **ICBSS Director General, Mr. Georgios MITRAKOS**, participated as keynote speaker at the **Specialized Training Course on “Economic Diplomacy”**, held at the premises of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria in Sofia.

The event was organised by the **Bulgarian Diplomatic Institute (BDI)** in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, under the auspices of the Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-Office of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC).

The training course aimed at providing diplomats, government officials and experts from the Bulgarian state administration, with up-to-date data and information on the value of economic diplomacy in relation to sustainability, competitiveness and innovation.

In his speech titled **“Promoting Synergies Across the Black Sea”**, Mr. Mitrakos highlighted the region's continued efforts in promoting cooperation through various bottom-up initiatives, such as joint projects and regional dialogue platforms, despite the ongoing war and the subsequent problems it creates to the Black Sea region. As he further noted, the current era of aggressive geopolitical competition and the resurgence of hard geopolitics have a negative impact on foreign policy, diplomacy and international relations, stressing the need for the EU to enhance its strategic autonomy and geostrategic vision.

In the sidelines, the Director General of ICBSS, **Mr. Georgios MITRAKOS** and the Director of the Bulgarian Diplomatic Institute, **Mrs. Tanya MIHAYLOVA**, signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** between the BDI and the ICBSS, marking the beginning of a new partnership, aimed at enhancing regional dialogue and promoting knowledge exchange.

This working visit aligns with ICBSS' commitment to fostering regional cooperation, sharing knowledge and promoting dialogue 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 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.