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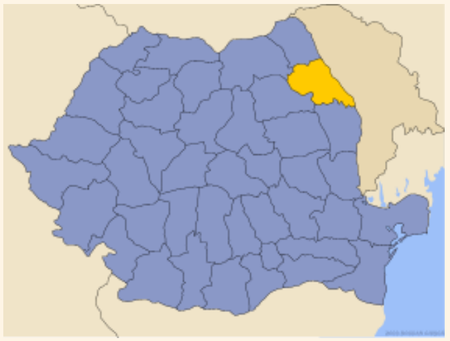
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# BLACK SEA BEYWATCH

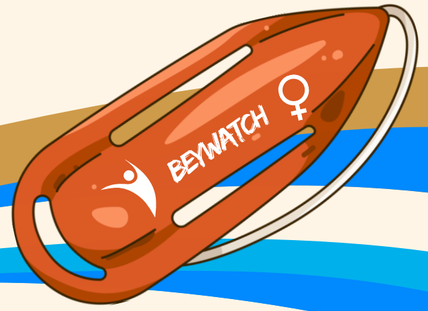
## Black Sea Blue Economy
## Youth and Women Watch

Tuesday, 20 October 2026



# The importance of city diplomacy in blue economy and the added value of women in multilevel governance


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# 1. Needs, Gaps, and How the Women on Board Project Promotes Gender Equality




## Needs and Gaps Addressed:

**Underrepresentation and Vertical Segregation**:
Women are heavily underrepresented in leadership and decision-making roles (an average of around 25% on boards within the maritime and blue economy sectors).

**Lack of Inclusive Policies:**
A shortage of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) tailored specifically to the blue/maritime sector, as well as a lack of safe and supportive work environments.

# 1. Needs, Gaps, and How the Women on Board Project Promotes Gender Equality




## Needs and Gaps Addressed:

**Lack of Gender-Disaggregated Data:**
Difficulty in collecting precise data regarding female participation in technical and operational sectors.

**Limited Access to Technical and Leadership Training:**
A mismatch between high academic qualifications of female graduates and actual opportunities for career advancement.

# How the Project Promotes Gender Equality:




**Interregional Cooperation:**
The project (funded via INTERREG Europe) brings together regions across Europe (including the Municipality of Iași) to exchange best practices and design regional action plans.

**Database of Best Practices:**
Identifies and disseminates over 30 successful, validated measures and practices across Europe.

# How the Project Promotes Gender Equality:



**Regional Stakeholder Groups (RMSG):**
Establishes a local collaborative network involving public administration, academia (USV), companies, and NGOs.

**Policy Briefs:**
Develops targeted recommendations for decision-makers to integrate a gender perspective into regional development policies.

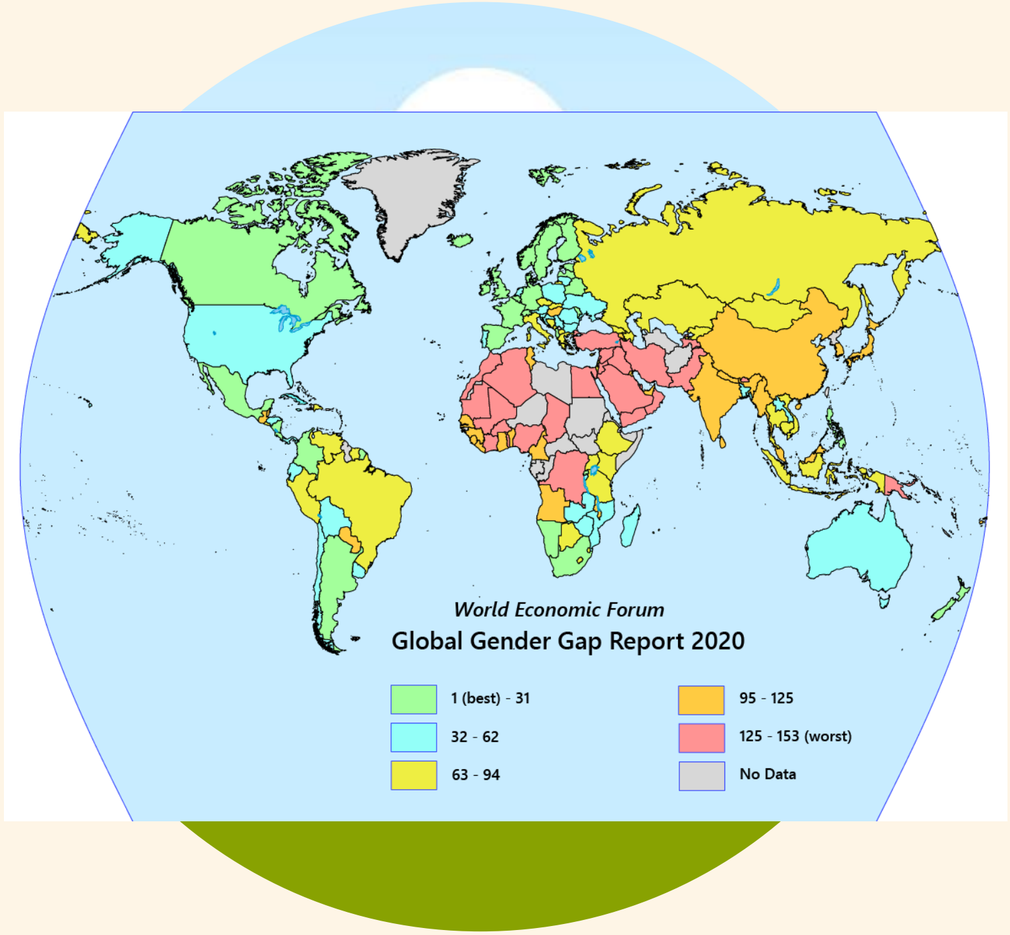
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# 2. Current Situation Based on the Gender Parity Report (Blue Economy at EU Level)

## Current Situation:

**Although women account for 40–45% of the total workforce in the European blue economy, distribution across sub-sectors is highly imbalanced:**

- ❑ Fisheries/Vessel Operations: Less than 4% of crew members on fishing vessels are women.
- ❑ Aquaculture: ~22% female representation.
- ❑ Processing & Coastal Tourism: Over 55% of the workforce (though concentrated primarily in lower-paid or seasonal roles).




**Leadership Shortage: The executive pipeline remains heavily male-dominated.**

## Major Challenges:

1. Traditional social norms and gender stereotypes surrounding maritime and aquatic labor.
2. Work-life balance integration barriers (lack of flexible scheduling or childcare infrastructure).
3. Gender pay gap and a lack of salary transparency.



## Proposed Recommendations from EU Reports:

1. Adoption of Gender Equality Plans (GEPs) featuring clear, monitored indicators by relevant authorities.
2. Development of dedicated mentorship and leadership training programs for women.
3. Encouraging young women and girls to pursue maritime/aquatic STEM fields starting in higher education.
4. Building professional support and association networks for women.



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# 3. Potential Benefits of the Blue Economy for Inland Areas – The Case of Iași Municipality & County



**Inland Waters & Aquaculture:**
Iași County possesses a rich hydrographic network (Prut, Siret, and Bahlui river basins) with significant potential for sustainable aquaculture, fish farming, and local fish processing.

**Research & Blue Biotechnology:**
Iași is a major university hub. Research on microalgae/biotechnology, water purification, sustainable aquatic ecosystem management, and future food sources can drive local start-ups and high-skilled job creation.

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# 3. Potential Benefits of the Blue Economy for Inland Areas – The Case of Iași Municipality & County



**Ecotourism & Inland Water Tourism:**
Promoting sustainable tourism in protected areas (e.g., the Prut River Meadow) and developing recreational water spaces.

**Circular Economy & Water Management:**
Projects focused on aquatic waste management, water recycling in industry and agriculture, and reducing overall carbon footprints.

# 4. Reflecting Project Priorities in USV Iași's Curricula and Educational Programs

**Ion Ionescu de la Brad University of Life Sciences (USV Iași) plays a vital role in training future specialists. The project's priorities can be integrated into its academic offering through:**

**Gender Equality & Leadership Course Modules:** Introducing elective modules on inclusive management and female leadership in agribusiness and aquatic biotechnologies.

**Curriculum Modernization in Aquaculture & Fisheries:** Incorporating green/blue innovation, digitalization, and sustainable entrepreneurship into the Faculty of Food and Animal Resources Engineering.



# 4. Reflecting Project Priorities in USV Iași's Curricula and Educational Programs

**Mentorship & Internship Programs:**
Creating direct partnerships through the project between female students and female leaders in the private sector and research across the Black Sea region.

**Research Grants:**
Encouraging young female researchers at USV to propose projects focused on the blue economy and sustainable development.



# 5. Best Practices, Successful Initiatives, and Replication across the Black Sea Region (and Iași County)

**Best Practices:**

**Support and Advocacy Networks:** Initiatives such as Hun Fisker (Norway) or Jenter i Havbruk (Women in Aquaculture), providing mutual support, visibility, and practical workplace equality solutions.

**Gender Equality Charters:**
Voluntary pledges signed by companies and public institutions guaranteeing female representation on boards and salary transparency.

**Blue Hackathons & Incubators for Women**: Acceleration programs designed specifically for young female entrepreneurs creating technological solutions for the aquatic/maritime sector.

# Replication in the Black Sea Region and Iași County:

**Regional Black Sea Network:**
As an academic and administrative hub in northeastern Romania, Iași can co-initiate a cross-border network (Romania – Republic of Moldova – Ukraine/Bulgaria) dedicated to women in blue research and entrepreneurship.

**Regional Aquaculture & Innovation Cluster:**
Establishing a local hub in Iași (USV + Municipality + Private Sector) to apply these best practices in professional training and funding for women-led businesses.

**Visibility Campaigns:**
Highlighting female role models—professors, researchers, and entrepreneurs across the region—to inspire the next generation of female university students.




**The blue economy is not a concept reserved solely for coastal areas, and gender equality is not merely a statistical goal.**

Through the Women on Board project, the Municipality of Iași and USV demonstrate that inland regions hold immense potential for innovation, research, and sustainable development. By embedding gender parity into higher education curricula, supporting female entrepreneurship, and adapting European best practices across the Black Sea region, we turn current challenges into lasting economic and social opportunities.

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# Thank You

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