PRESS RELEASE

Athens, 19 November 2026

Participation of ICBSS at the 31st United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP31)

On 10-18 November 2026, the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) participated at the **2026 United Nations Climate Change Conference** (COP31), held in Antalya, Republic of Türkiye.

COP31 is the latest session of the supreme decision-making body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), representing a critical milestone where countries are expected to strengthen their climate commitments and accelerate the transition toward a low-carbon future. Since 1995, these annual summits have served as the primary global platform for negotiating and advancing collective action against climate change.

Building on the significance of COP31 being hosted by the Republic of Türkiye, a BSEC Member State, the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) in cooperation with the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS) and the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB), co-organised **three official side events focused on the wider Black Sea**, a region heavily affected by climate change.

The first side event titled **"Mobilizing Finance for Country-Led Climate Action"**, took place on 10 November 2026, co-organised by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB), Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW), and the OPEC Fund for International Development. The event brought together representatives of governments, development banks, institutional partners, donors, private sector representatives, and academic institutions to highlight the experiences of countries and multilateral development finance institutions in supporting capacities to translate strategic visions and policies into implementable actions that mobilise market transformation and both public and private finance. The ICBSS was represented by Director General, **Mr. Georgios Mitrakos**, who participated as speaker in the Setting the Scene panel. In his intervention, Mr. Mitrakos drew on the findings of the **ICBSS Report on the Implementation of the BSEC Strategy on Climate Change Adaptation (2026),** highlighting funding mechanisms accessed and projects implemented by the 13 BSEC Member States to support the national and intra-regional initiatives for climate adaptation across the Black Sea.

The second side event, a High-Level Session titled **"FROM NATIONAL TO REGIONAL ACTION: Advancing Climate Adaptation in the Wider Black Sea Region"**, took place on 12 November 2026 at the Bulgarian Pavilion, organised by the Ministry of Environment and Water of the Republic of Bulgaria, the BSEC PERMIS, the BSTDB, and the ICBSS. The event hosted policymakers, experts, and development bank representatives to discuss progress and explore funding opportunities to support regional cooperation for climate adaptation and resilience across the Black Sea basin. On behalf of ICBSS, Director General **Mr. Georgios Mitrakos**, presented an overall review of the **ICBSS Report on the Implementation of the BSEC Strategy on Climate Change Adaptation (2026),** focusing on BSEC Member States' efforts and good practices to advance climate resilience and adaptation at national level, despite persistent bottlenecks and challenges.

The third side event **"FROM COOPERATION TO INVESTMENTS: Advancing Climate Adaptation in the Wider Black Sea Region"** took place on 18 November 2026 at the Turkish Pavilion, organised by the BSEC PERMIS, the BSTDB, and the ICBSS. This High-Level event aimed to highlight joint efforts to translate policy frameworks into concrete actions, investments and regional initiatives in response to climate-related challenges affecting the Black Sea.

The **Report on the Implementation of the BSEC Strategy on Climate Change Adaptation (2026)**, prepared and published by the ICBSS, provides the first regional assessment of the implementation of the **BSEC Strategy on Climate Change Adaptation** (2017) during the period 2018-2026. The Report evaluates the progress achieved under four strategic elements, i.e. regional cooperation, funding and project development, partnerships and awareness, and institutional and capacity development, reviews the degree of achievement of the Strategy's targets and indicators, examines the contribution of BSEC to regional adaptation efforts, and proposes future priorities for strengthening climate adaptation in the wider Black Sea region.

In the sidelines, Mr. Mitrakos had various bilateral meetings and discussions with national representatives, experts, and practitioners, where he presented the ICBSS' diverse portfolio of activities and projects to advance knowledge and advocacy for sustainability, development and resilience across the Black Sea.

This working visit aligns with ICBSS' commitment to advancing knowledge, shaping policy, and connecting regions in the wider Black Sea region and beyond.

For more about the ICBSS Report on the Implementation of the BSEC Strategy on Climate Change Adaptation: https://icbss.org/new-publication-report-on-the-implementation-of-the-bsec-strategy-on-climate-change-adaptation/

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.