

	CONFERENCE OF PERIPHERAL MARITIME REGIONS ΔΙΑΣΚΕΨΗ ΠΕΡΙΦΕΡΕΙΑΚΩΝ & ΠΑΡΑΚΤΙΩΝ ΠΕΡΙΦΕΡΕΙΩΝ	
	BALKAN & BLACK SEA REGIONAL COMMISSION ΕΠΙΤΡΟΠΗ ΒΑΛΚΑΝΙΩΝ & ΕΥΞΕΙΝΟΥ ΠΟΝΤΟΥ	
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ACTIVITY REPORT - WORK PLAN

CPMR POLITICAL BUREAU, CAEN (FR) - 11 FEBRUARY 2011

1. EP RESOLUTION ON AN EU STRATEGY FOR THE BLACK SEA

The most important development for the region over the past few months is the adoption by the EP on 20/01/2011 of a Resolution on an EU Strategy for the Black Sea based on a draft resolution of its RELEX Committee, *Rapporteur*: Mr Traian Ungureanu. This important political initiative will lead to the adoption by the EU Council of an integrated EU Strategy for the Black Sea. To this end, the EP considers that, given the strategic importance of the Black Sea Region for the EU and the rather limited results of the BSS, a strategy should be launched to enhance the coherence and visibility of EU action in the region and that the EU Black Sea Strategy should be an integral part of the EU's broader foreign and security policy and calls on the EC and the EEAS to draw up a strategy in parallel with the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy, with a detailed action plan, clear objectives, flagship initiatives and benchmarks.

Among other things, the Resolution:

- Recognises the importance of regional and local authorities and stakeholders for the planning and implementation of the strategy, given their close links with the territory and with local people. It calls, therefore, for their needs to be identified and for them to be fully involved in the strategy, welcomes the creation of the Black Sea Civil Society Forum and encourages strengthened cooperation among local authorities, NGOs, civil society and business;
- Welcomes the launch of the Joint Operational Programme for Cross-Border Cooperation in the Black Sea Basin under ENPI and the high number of applications received. It believes, however, that the slow rate of its functioning reflects the deficiencies of the current funding mechanisms and calls for the programme to continue for the next programming period as well, suggesting the creation of a separate EU budget line for the Black Sea Strategy. It also encourages the development of an integrated approach and the use of the well-established principles of the EU's Cohesion Policy and Neighbourhood Policy;
- Regards inclusiveness and regional ownership as important principles of the EU approach towards the region and sees Turkey and Russia as crucial partners in Black Sea regional cooperation and believes that the dual role of Bulgaria, Romania and Greece as both littoral States and EU Member States is essential to the success of an EU Policy in the Black Sea area and stresses the complementary nature of the BSS and the Eastern Partnership, and calls on the Commission to make positive use of the differing approaches of the two initiatives and to clarify, at all levels, how this substantial degree of complementarity is to be exploited;
- Welcomes the development of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, and emphasises the need for its extension towards the Black Sea Region;
- Considers that ministerial meetings between the EU and the wider Black Sea Region countries should be organised on a regular basis and should include all actors and countries in the region, as the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC).

The EP Resolution continues, dealing with issues of security and good governance, energy, transport and the environment and economic, social and human development.

Among others it calls:

- On the Black Sea riparian states to conclude a memorandum of understanding on the development of Black Sea maritime corridors and asks the Commission to open a TEN-T budget line with funding for Black Sea maritime corridors similar to those which already exist for the Baltic Sea, North Sea and Mediterranean Sea maritime corridors;
- On the EU to include the Black Sea Region in the Integrated Maritime Policy and, in particular, the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) on an equal footing with the other European basins;
- The EP Resolution on an EU Strategy for the Black Sea is an excellent opportunity for the BBSRC to motivate its Member Regions to a constructive dialogue to identify the role of regional authorities for an integrated EU Policy for the Black Sea and will try to make sure that its proposals will be taken into consideration in the stages of the elaboration and adoption of the Strategy by the EU Member States. It will also be the main item in the Agenda of the BBSRC General Assembly of Varna, as a major tool for us for attracting new Member Regions.

2. EUROPEAN COMMISSION PRESENTED PROPOSALS FOR AN EU STRATEGY FOR THE DANUBE REGION

Another important development partly for our Region was the presentation by the European Commission on 9 December 2010 of its proposal for an EU Strategy for the Danube Region and its 115 million inhabitants. This initiative seeks to develop the huge economic potential and improve environmental conditions of the Danube Region. The Strategy will bring added value, by ensuring coherence between different policy areas, and greater coordination between participating states. While there are no new funds for implementation of the Strategy, closer alignment of programmes adopted by the Danube States should mean that the €100 billion available to the Region in the current financial period achieves greater impact.

The Strategy contains a detailed action plan based around four pillars:

- A. Connecting the Danube Region (e.g. improving mobility, encouraging sustainable energy and promoting culture and tourism);
- B. Protecting the environment in the Danube Region (e.g. restoring water quality, managing environmental risks and preserving biodiversity);
- C. Building prosperity in the Danube Region (e.g. developing research capacity, education and information technologies, supporting the competitiveness of enterprises and investing in people's skills);
- D. Strengthening the Danube Region (e.g. stepping up institutional capacity and improving cooperation to tackle organised crime).

3. BERLIN - 2nd MEETING OF THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM, BERLIN (18-19 November 2010)

The BBSRC was invited to participate in the second meeting of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (CSF) that took place on 18-19 November 2010 in Berlin. It gathered together some 230 civil society organisations (CSOs) from partner countries, EU Member States as well as from third countries. The aim of the Forum was to discuss the implementation of the EaP and work out recommendations of the CSOs on further development of the initiative. It was attended by Commissioner Füle and Minister Westerwelle. The second meeting of the Civil Society Forum worked out recommendations on the implementation of the EaP, which were presented to the Ministers for Foreign Affairs gathered at the EaP Ministerial Meeting on 13/12/2010.

4. ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE JOINT OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME "BLACK SEA BASIN 2007-2013", THESSALONIKI, GR, 25 NOVEMBER 2010

The objective of the meeting was to share the results so far of the Joint Operational Programme "Black Sea Basin 2007-2013" and the 16 projects approved at the first call of proposals, offer networking opportunities for the Programme stakeholders and stimulate future call for proposals-lessons learnt, looking towards the second call for proposals which will open later in 2011.

5. BSEC SUMMIT IN THESSALONIKI, 26 NOVEMBER 2010

The BBSRC/CPMR, being a sectoral partner of BSEC, participated in the 23rd Meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the BSEC Member States which took place in Thessaloniki and resulted in the Thessaloniki Joint Declaration on "Combating Climate Change in the Black Sea Area". During the Greek Chairmanship-in-Office of BSEC, another important Declaration was adopted in Athens, on 15 November 2010 by the BSEC Ministers in charge of Tourism. Romania has now assumed the 6 months rotation chairmanship-in-office of BSEC, the motto being "*Building Sustainability, Enhancing Commitments*".

6. PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2011 BBSRC VARNA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The top priority of our Commission during the first semester of 2011 is to prepare the 2011 BBSRC General Assembly which will take place in Varna, Bulgaria on 8 July 2011, following the kind invitation of Governor Mr Dancho SIMEONOV. The Agenda will deal with the EP Resolution on an EU Strategy for the Black Sea Region from a macro-regional perspective and the place of the Regions, the perspective for an EU Integrated Maritime Policy to include the Black Sea Region, the BSEC initiative on the coordinated development of the Black Sea Ring Highway – great potential for the development of the Black Sea maritime regions which is of particular importance for the BBSRC Member Regions and the adoption of a new BBSRC medium-term work programme. An assessment of the existing EU territorial cooperation projects in the area from the point of view of regional authorities will also be included. Finally, the new President and Vice-Presidents of the BBSRC will be elected.

7. OTHER ISSUES OF BBSRC INVOLVEMENT

The BBSRC will also be involved (until its General Assembly in Varna on 8 July 2011), with the following issues amongst others:

- Will contact its Member Regions as much as possible, especially the Turkish and Greek Regions, following the institutional reform of regional authorities in Greece.
- Will address a questionnaire to its Member Regions with a view to improving the existing coordination among Member Regions and the BBSRC Secretariat.
- Will try as much as possible to get in touch with non-Member Regions of the CPMR and BBSRC in the Balkans and the Black Sea area, to introduce our organisation.
- Will monitor developments on ongoing EU policies in the area, such as the European Neighbourhood Policy, the Black Sea Synergy, the Eastern Partnership, and related institutions such as the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions, the European Parliament, the BSEC under Romanian Chairmanship-in-Office, etc.

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