



PRESS RELEASE
“BLUEING THE BLACK SEA” PROGRAMME LAUNCH WORKSHOP
(4 February 2021)

BSEC PERMIS made a strong start to the flagship “Blueing the Black Sea” Programme (BBSEA) by holding online the first of a series of national consultations on February 4th.

The new BBSEA Regional Initiative is aimed at “Tackling Marine Pollution in the Black Sea” and is funded by the *Global Environment Facility* (GEF) and supported by the World Bank. Today’s session outlined the concept of the BBSEA to over one hundred participants and demonstrated how it will underpin the *Common Maritime Agenda* (CMA); the latter was adopted in 2019 by 6 littoral states of the Black Sea – plus Moldova – and is currently coordinated by Turkey, the country which was the main focus of today.

The consultation workshop was comprised of two working sessions, the first on the state of play on the current level of marine pollution in the Black Sea, which was targeted at identifying sources, impacts and existing prevention efforts; the second focussed on the BBSEA Regional Project in Turkey. It sought to gather feedback on what would be the priorities of public authorities, private stakeholders and environmental experts on the overall project and it outlined the activities it planned to embrace to try to reduce Black Sea pollution. These include the development and sharing of sustainable business standards, how to attract “green” and innovative financing capacity, obtaining financial support for “green” and PPP investments.

In his opening remarks, the Secretary General of BSEC PERMIS, Ambassador Michael B. Christides said “*the precise architecture of the BBSEA is yet to be defined*” hence the need for the country consultation sessions. But, “*we recognize that marine litter and marine pollution are not a challenge for one country alone, it is a regional challenge. A problem that requires a regional solution based on consistent multilateral cooperation supported by adequate and consistent funding*”.

The workshop was coordinated by the Executive Manager of BSEC PERMIS, Ms. Rositsa Stoeva who told the audience that the BBSEA programme was currently planned to last from September 2021 to early 2024. “*We believe that, in the medium-term, the project will help to create more incentives for public and private investments for pollution reduction, all leading to the longer-term outcome of an improved environmental status for the Black Sea with increased economic and social benefits for the population*”.

Participants to the workshop were also welcomed by Mr. Eyyüp Karahan, Director General, DG Environmental Management, Ministry of Environment and Urbanization of the Republic of Turkey, by Ms. Patrizia Busolini of the EU’s DG Mare and Ms. Berengere Prince, Lead Natural Resources Specialist, World Bank.

For more details on the BBSEA and how you can contribute: <http://www.bsec-bsvkc.org/Forms/BlueingTheBlackSeaProject>