



ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Permanent International Secretariat

PRESS RELEASE ON THE SECOND NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON BLUEING THE BLACK SEA PROGRAMME HELD IN GEORGIA

(25 February 2021, Online)

BSEC PERMIS held the second in a series of 'National Consultation' sessions today as part of its efforts to combat marine pollution in the Black Sea, this time focusing on Georgia. The event was titled 'Greening the Coast and Blueing the Sea for a Resilient Georgia: An Initiative to Tackle Climate Change and Marine Pollution Under the Blueing the Black Sea Program (BBSEA). The program is a regional initiative to tackle marine pollution and catalyze Blue Economy investments in the Black Sea region under the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA). It is supported by the World Bank who co-hosted today's session. Two strong World Bank reports were presented on: (1) The Impact of Climate Change on Georgia's Coastal Zone and (2) The Cost of Coastal Zone Degradation in Georgia.

The stimulating - and highly interactive - workshop heard details about the direction of the BBSEA program and took soundings from the audience of experts and professionals on how it could be both implemented in Georgia and shaped in the wider Black Sea region.

In his opening remarks, BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B Christides said that "marine litter and marine pollution in the Black Sea are not a challenge for one country alone. It is a regional challenge. It is also a battle that never ends". He told the virtual audience "the result of this battle depends on the interest and input of you all".

In her overview of the 3 year BBSEA-GEF (Global Environment Facility) project, BSEC Executive Manager, Ms Rositsa Stoeva said it had "the long term objective of an improved environmental status of the Black Sea with increased economic and social benefits for the population."

Steven Schonberger, World Bank Sustainable Development Regional Director said the BBSEA project was "of global significance". He added that "any country tackling pollution alone cannot guarantee a desirable quality of the sea water in an enclosed eco-system such as the Black Sea. Considering this common ecosystem, collaboration at the regional level is essential".

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Speaking for the Government of Georgia, Ms Nino Tandilashvili, Dep. Minister of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, told the audience “The Black Sea is a very important resource for us and our marine spaces are a huge priority”. Georgia is working on including coastal areas in an update of its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the 2015 Paris Agreement to be submitted to the United Nations shortly.

Participants to the workshop were also welcomed by the moderator, Paola Agostini, World Bank Lead Natural Resources Specialist, Sebastian Molineus, World Bank Regional Director for the South Caucasus and Ms Berengere Prince, Lead Natural Resources Specialist, World Bank, who said that implementation of the BBSEA project would start in September.

For more details on the [BBSEA project](#)