



PRESS RELEASE
**“BLUEING THE BLACK SEA” PROGRAMME HOLDS NATIONAL
CONSULTATION IN UKRAINE**
(11 March 2021)

In conjunction with the World Bank, BSEC PERMIS held the latest of its ‘National Consultation’ sessions today on the Blueing the Black Sea Program (BBSEA), a new regional initiative to combat marine pollution in the Black Sea.

The webinar, focussing on Ukraine and held in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine and the Common Maritime Agenda Hub of Ukraine, was designed to introduce the BBSEA program to an audience of experts, academics and governmental organisations to sound out their ideas for how best to implement it both in Ukraine and across the region. The program is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and supported by the World Bank in line with the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) signed by seven Black Sea countries in 2019.

Using highly interactive tools in two Working Sessions, the workshop consulted the audience on Ukraine’s key pollution challenges in order to build a diagnostic analysis of the sources, impacts and current prevention efforts which will shape the BBSEA program locally. It also tapped into the knowledge and expertise of the audience on how the program should be implemented in Ukraine, including how it fits in with other local pollution projects, where investment should be specifically directed and what are the other possible sources of funding.

In his opening remarks, the Secretary General of BSEC PERMIS, Ambassador Michael B Christides thanked the participants for attending as “you will be defining the overall picture of what this project will be”. He also showed two powerful images of a baby amid a sea of waste that the famous photographer Karl Taylor has given BSEC permission to use in its efforts to combat the acute problem of marine pollution in the Black Sea.

Speaking for the Government of Ukraine, Ms. Iryna Stavchuk, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of Ukraine said the BBSEA project was “very important to Ukraine”. She added: “Research tells us that the Black Sea is twice as polluted as the pollution of the Mediterranean. 83% of that pollution is from plastics”. But there was positive news with the current drafting by the Ministry of the Environment of Ukraine of a new Marine Strategy to help tackle the issue.

Steven Schonberger, Regional Director for Sustainable Development of the World Bank agreed that there are positive signs. “The severe pollution in the Black Sea has happened only over the last 20 years so this makes it reversible”, he said. “The World Bank is delighted to see Ukraine emerging as an environmental leader in Europe. But it does require a regional solution and collaboration and cooperation across national boundaries is essential”.



For the EU's DG Mare, Ms Patricia Busolini congratulated the organisers in attraction such a large number of participants for the Consultation Session. She pointed them to BSEC's new Black Sea Virtual Knowledge Centre website <http://www.bsec-bsvkc.org/Forms/Default> "a key tool" for information about the maritime sector of the Black Sea including the BBSEA.

In concluding, BSEC's Ms Rositsa Stoeva, who presented an overview of the BBSEA program, praised the audience for providing a number of valuable ideas. For the World Bank Ms. Berengere Prince, another of the BBSEA's leaders, said "we are so thankful for all the input we received today".