



PRESS RELEASE
“BLUEING THE BLACK SEA”
BBSEA PROGRAM SEEKS FEEDBACK IN NATIONAL CONSULTATION
WORKSHOP IN BULGARIA
(29 March 2021)

Nearly 100 people participated in BSEC PERMIS’s latest ‘National Consultation’ workshop on 29 March 2021 about its flagship Blueing the Black Sea Programme (BBSEA) to tackle marine pollution and catalyze 'blue economy' investments in the Black Sea region, this time focusing on Bulgaria. The session, held in conjunction with the World Bank, the Black Sea Commission and the Bulgarian Government’s Ministries of Environment and Water, Regional Development and Public Works and Transport, Information Technology and Communications, secured a big tranche of ideas and suggestions from the expert audience to help develop the BBSEA programme and the implementation of the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) in Bulgaria and beyond.

In two highly interactive sessions, the workshop sought feedback on: Bulgaria’s key pollution sources and challenges; what is its Blue Economy strategy; what policy frameworks are already in place; who are the key stakeholders; and what are the possible sources of funding and investment. The answers will shape the diagnostic outline for the BBSEA plan and the action phase itself.

The program is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and supported by the World Bank in line with the Common Maritime Agenda signed by the six Black Sea littoral countries and Moldova in 2019.

The Bulgarian ‘National Consultation’ was distinctive in that it also featured a presentation on a recent *Policy Note: Toward Blue Economy Development in Bulgaria*, a report developed by the World Bank in collaboration with the Bulgarian Government. It emphasises the economic value of Bulgaria’s Blue Economy which potentially can provide a sizable contribution to the country’s post-pandemic recovery. There was also an update on the *MARSPLAN-BS II* project which supports the development of Bulgaria’s first ever maritime spatial plan in the Black Sea and helps ensure the coherence of neighbouring Romania with it.

Speaking for the Bulgarian Government, Ms. Iliana Todorova, Deputy Minister of Environment and Water and Ms. Nadezhda Buhova, Director, Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technologies, both gave their unreserved backing to the BBSEA project and the importance of the CMA for Bulgaria and the wider Black Sea region.