



PRESS RELEASE
ON THE ONLINE DISCUSSION
“ACTIONS RATHER THAN WORDS FOR THE BLUE ECONOMY
IN THE BLACK SEA REGION”
(3 June 2021)

A large international audience followed on 3 June 2021 a high-profile online discussion entitled “*Actions rather than words for the Blue Economy in the Black Sea Region*”, which was hosted by BSEC PERMIS and the World Bank, with the organizational support of the “*Delphi Economic Forum*”. The event took place on the occasion of the promotion of the “*Blueing the Black Sea*” project (BBSEA), which is being funded by the *Global Environment Facility* (GEF), supported by the World Bank and jointly implemented by BSEC PERMIS. It aims to combat marine pollution in the Black Sea and to catalyse Blue Economy activities.

The distinguished panellists talked about the BBSEA project but also focused on a series of wider key themes: the importance of the Blue Economy for the sustainable development of the region, the implementation of the *Common Maritime Agenda* (CMA) for the Black Sea and on the need for regional infrastructure investments to support the goals on marine pollution, energy, tourism and culture.

In his opening remarks, BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. Christides welcomed the esteemed panel and expressed his deep satisfaction for BSEC PERMIS having assumed the responsibility to implement the BBSEA project; he underlined that this development is a further proof that the BSEC Organization has matured into a trustworthy partner and interlocutor, able to join forces with other organizations, international financial institutions and UN agencies for the implementation of concrete projects, benefiting the Black Sea region.

The discussion was divided into three sections. Firstly, on the “*Blue Economy in the Black Sea present and future*”. The Blue Economy in the Black Sea is currently not as important as it could be. Secondly, “*The sectors, the potentials, the needs*” (of the Blue Economy). How could new innovative sectors like Offshore Renewable Energy be developed? Thirdly, “*Development or sustainable development?*” How to make development truly sustainable and how to finance it.

Expertly moderated by Mr. Spyros **Kouvelis**, Director of the EPLO Institute for Sustainable Development and former Deputy MFA of Greece, the strong line-up of distinguished speakers addressed each of these topics: Mr Teodor **Melescanu**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania (2017-19); Mrs Anna **Diamantopoulou**, President of DIKTIO – Network for Reform in Greece and Europe and former European Commissioner and Mr Steven **Schonberger**, Regional Director, Sustainable Development Department for Europe and Central Asia, World Bank.



Living up to the theme of the session that “actions not words” were needed to advance the Blue Economy, the panellists suggested a number of concrete and practical ways it could be pushed forward in the Black Sea region. Among other, they all agreed that what is urgently needed for the effective introduction of Blue Economy activities in the wider Black Sea region are: education and training of the human factor, more knowledge sharing among states, adoption of reforms and introduction of innovation, further motivation to the private sector to invest in Blue Economy actions. Finally, all participants expressed their satisfaction for the engagement of the World Bank in the region and for the implementation of the BBSEA project by the BSEC PERMIS, underlining the enthusiasm and positive motivation demonstrated so far by all stakeholders in the BSEC Member States concerned.