



PRESS RELEASE
ON THE 4th GENERAL ASSEMBLY (GA) OF THE BRIDGE-BS PROJECT

The *4th General Assembly (GA) of the BRIDGE-BS* project was organized by the Middle East Technical University (METU), the Institute of Marine Sciences (IMS) in Erdemli, Mersin on 1–2 October 2025. The two-day event brought together scientists, policymakers, and stakeholders to review results, strengthen exploitation pathways, and define the project's long-term legacy.

As partner of the "*BRIDGE-BS: Advancing Black Sea Research and Innovation to Co-Develop Blue Growth within Resilient Ecosystems*" project consortium, BSEC PERMIS Executive Manager in charge of Project Management Ambassador Georgi Panayotov, and the Project team members, participated in the event on behalf of BSEC-PERMIS.

In two days, sessions of the 4th GA were focused on the state of the Black Sea at both the basin and local pilot site levels. Pilot site leaders presented findings on stakeholder engagement, environmental observations, and policy relevance. Key highlight was the presentation of the Digital Twin Ocean Demonstrator for the Black Sea, which integrated socio-economic data, AI-based decision-support tools, and the BRIDGE-BS database. Discussions explored connections to European initiatives such as EDITO, EMODnet, and Copernicus. Sessions covered the Policy Brief and Roadmap, the Black Sea Accelerator & High-Tech Solutions, adaptive management recommendations, and capacity-building initiatives for youth and early-career researchers. The wrap-up session finalized legacy elements such as the Black Sea Ecosystem Observatory (BEO), Digital Twin outputs, sensor technologies, and publications. It was also announced that the **project's Final Conference will take place in Brussels on 25 November**.

During the closing ceremony of the event, Ambassador Panayotov, on behalf of BSEC PERMIS, presented a commemorative plaque to the representatives of the METU IMS for successfully coordinating the consortium and celebrated its 50th Anniversary. In his remarks, Ambassador Panayotov emphasized the importance of continuing IMS's valuable work and expressed BSEC's commitment to further strengthening and expanding cooperation with METU IMS.

On 3 October 2025, participants were also invited to the *International Symposium on Black Sea–Mediterranean Science Connections*, held on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the METU Institute of Marine Sciences (IMS).

More detailed information about the events and the project itself can be found at: <http://bridgeblacksea.org/>