



**PRESS RELEASE ON**  
**THE 12<sup>th</sup> EDITION OF THE BLACK SEA NGO FORUM**  
*(Istanbul, 23-25 October 2019)*

The 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the Black Sea NGO was organized by the Romanian NGDO Platform – FOND in partnership with the Center for International and European Studies (Kadir Has University) and with the financial support of the European Commission.

The Black Sea NGO Forum is a unique regional event, initiated back in 2008 within the framework of the Black Sea Synergy. The vision of the Forum is to contribute to prosperity and stability in the Black Sea Region with effective civil society organizations' (CSOs) participation, by creating an open space for debate, mutual knowledge and understanding, communication and cooperation among civil society representatives, governments and international organizations active in the wider Black Sea Region, with a focus on sharing good practices in various domains and success stories of regional cooperation.

This year's edition of the Forum continued the discussion held last year in Brussels and highlighted the progress made so far in advancing the Black Sea Synergy European Policy, such as the adoption of the Common Maritime Agenda, the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda, as well as the Council Conclusions on the EU's engagement to the Black Sea regional cooperation, which emphasized the relevant contribution of CSOs for the implementation of these very important strategic documents.

The program included various discussions and panels, with the participation of more than 120 participants with various backgrounds from 17 countries, among which the 10 are BSEC Member States. The main objective was to bring more visibility on the importance of the Black Sea Synergy as a policy framework both for the European level, as well as for the civil society from this region.

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. CHISTIDES participated in the plenary session titled "Advancing the Black Sea Synergy", and in his intervention, reiterated that BSEC attached great importance to the involvement of civil society in addressing the pressing issues facing our societies, such as environmental protection and climate change, waste management, promoting the implementation of the SDGs, youth projects and more. However, he acknowledged that the CSO dimension was often neglected and that the level of cooperation between BSEC PERMIS and NGOs was not satisfactory and needed improvement. Ambassador CHISTIDES informed participants on the many ways that BSEC PERMIS could be useful in promoting CSOs goals and appealed to the latter to address the PERMIS with concrete proposals for cooperation.