



PRESS RELEASE ON AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGN WITHIN THE BLACK SEA REACT PROJECT

The Permanent International Secretariat of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC PERMIS), together with the Sarıyer Municipality, organized on 18 January 2022 an awareness raising campaign within “*Black Sea React!*”, co-funded by the European Commission under Grant Contract ENI/2020/421-957.

The project is coordinated by the BSEC PERMIS in cooperation with the Municipality of Sarıyer, the International Center for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) and GAMA Recycling. The Consulate General of the USA in Istanbul is an Associated Partner.

The aim of the project is to contribute to regional dialogue on mitigating and effectively tackling marine pollution and marine litter in the Black Sea, while at the same time seeking innovative solutions to relevant problems.

The event took place in the BKSM Hall (Boğaziçi Kültür Sanat Merkezi) of Sarıyer Municipality as part of the awareness raising campaign among the younger generations about the issue of marine litter and specifically the recycling of plastic litter and lost or abandoned fishing gear.

It was attended by the Mayor of Sarıyer Mr. Şükrü Genç, the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu, the US Consul General Ms. Daria Darnell and several guests from the Istanbul diplomatic corps, the BSEC Related Bodies, BSEC Observers and Sectoral Dialog Partners.

An educational/informative kit was presented to school kids age eight from the local schools. Around 70 kids participated in the event. The kit contains a book, a diary, a recycled bag, a pin and a sticker. “*Atto and the Clean Sea*” is a unique story created by the BSEC PERMIS for the purposes of the project. During the event end-products (t-shirts and toys) which were produced from the collected old fishing nets and plastics litter have been also presented.

Welcoming the guests, the Mayor of Sarıyer Mr. Şükrü Genç, said that the *Black Sea React Project* will create awareness on the negative effects of ghost nets and plastic litter on the marine environment, as well as help diminish the frightening amount of litter so recklessly thrown into the sea. If marine pollution is not prevented, he added, our sea and source of live hood for millions of people will “die”.



In his statement, Ambassador Lazar Comanescu reminded that the BSEC Organization's aim is to continue raising awareness among the people of the BSEC Member States especially younger generation to reduce marine litter in the Black Sea and to encourage plastic recycling. He thanked partners for supporting the project's implementation.

The US Consul General, Ms. Daria Darnell, expressed her belief that the project will be beneficial also to Turkey's Black Sea neighbours and underlined that the US Consulate General is happy and proud to have financially contributed to its implementation. "Let's work together to make a difference in protecting the environment" she said.

All participants received a copy of the informative school kit, recycled t-shirt and toy.