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JOINT STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

Black Sea Synergy: review of a regional cooperation initiative

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1 Introduction

The Black Sea Synergy initiative was proposed by the European Commission in a Communication to the Parliament and the Council in April 2007¹. The European Parliament highlighted the importance of strengthened cooperation between the European Union and the countries of the region in its Resolution of 17 January 2008². The Black Sea Synergy was formally launched at a joint meeting of European Union and Black Sea Foreign Ministers in Kiev in February 2008.

In June 2008, the European Commission released a report³ on the first year of implementation of the Black Sea Synergy. The report described the progress achieved in implementing the tasks set by the 2007 Communication and produced a number of forward-looking proposals, including the establishment of three sectoral partnerships: environment, transport and energy. Since then, the environmental partnership has produced tangible results in a number of focus areas⁴, while new areas of cooperation such as the cross-cutting integrated maritime policy have emerged. Since 2009, the European Union (EU) has invested nearly EUR 140 million in the region.

The European Parliament in 2011 adopted a second resolution calling for the further development of the EU's policies towards the Black Sea region.

The present report covers the period 2009 until 2014. It offers a review of the Black Sea Synergy regional cooperation initiative and highlights a number of "lessons learnt" which will inform the future development of the Synergy. The Black Sea Synergy Initiative aims to focus political attention at the regional level and invigorate ongoing cooperation processes. In so doing it takes account of the range of EU policies and programmes applicable to the EU's differentiated relations with the countries of the region. Its primary objective is to further cooperation within the Black Sea region and between the region as a whole and the EU. The Synergy is intended as a flexible framework that will ensure greater coherence and policy guidance. It envisages a bottom-up project development approach aimed at building on concrete deliverables in the environment, maritime affairs, fisheries, maritime transport, energy, education, civil society, cross border cooperation and research fields.

Recent events in Ukraine have impacted on the EU's policies and programmes in the Black Sea region. The illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula by the Russian Federation (Russia) is not recognised by the EU and the international community. Accordingly, EU-funded projects in Crimea have been suspended, with the exception of those in support of civil society and citizen-to-citizen contacts. In addition, the July 2014 European Council invited the European Commission to re-assess EU-Russia cooperation programmes with a view to taking a decision, on a case by case basis, on the suspension of the implementation of EU bilateral and regional cooperation programmes.

2 Progress to date

The 2007 Communication formulated concrete goals and tasks across a range of policy fields. It also proposed the establishment of sectoral partnerships which would bring together all or some Black Sea Synergy participants to cooperate on individual projects. The progress

¹ COM (2007) 160 final.

² Find at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P6-TA-2008-0017&language=EN>.

³ COM (2008) 391 final.

⁴ See point 2.3 below and the Annex.

achieved to date in the various sectors is set out below. Detailed information on the main cooperation initiatives and projects mentioned below can be found in the Annex to the present report.

2.1 Integrated Maritime Policy

In its recent Blue Growth Communication⁵, the Commission affirmed the role of the seas as a common resource and potential source of new jobs and growth (i.e. 'blue growth'). Translated into the Black Sea context, the EU has stepped-up its efforts to advocate for increased coordination and targeted synergies between the different sectors reliant on the sea (i.e. 'blue economy') by hosting a stakeholder workshop⁶ with Bulgarian and Romanian authorities (held in 2011) and convening a Ministerial Stakeholder conference⁷. Studies have been carried out to increase knowledge about the blue economies of the Black Sea littoral states, to identify areas for enhanced cooperation and to explore the potential for maritime clusters⁸.

2.1.1 Marine knowledge

Over 20 organisations from the Black Sea littoral states are working together in order to make their marine data more accessible, interoperable and useful to end-users under the framework of the European Marine Observation and Data Network⁹ (EMODNet). Data is now available through a single web portal, and a low-resolution sea-bed map of all EU waters, including the Black Sea, will be prepared by 2016, and progressively improved in resolution by 2020.

2.1.2 Spatial planning

In 2014, EU Member States agreed to go beyond single sea-related sectors and start developing and implementing coherent processes to plan human uses of their maritime space (maritime spatial planning), and to establish appropriate cross border cooperation¹⁰. The EU is supporting this process in the Black Sea by launching a dedicated call for proposals for a cross-border cooperation project between Bulgaria and Romania, which is also open to participation by other, non-EU countries in the sea-basin to ensure consistency of ecosystem-based maritime spatial planning across borders.

2.1.3 Surveillance

Since 2007, the EU has supported measures to develop standards to allow interoperability between maritime surveillance systems. With the Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE), the EU is building a key pillar of the new EU Maritime Security Strategy.

2.2 Fisheries

As part of the reformed EU Common fisheries policy (CFP), fishing quotas have been set for the two commercial species in the sea-basin (sprat and turbot). For the time being, these measures cover the two EU Member States of the Black Sea region only. To address the very worrying situation of some stocks in the basin¹¹, a specific working group was created within the framework of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) Scientific Committee to regularly monitor developments and give advice on possible conservation measures. Management measures for the Black Sea are currently being studied in view of the

⁵ Find at: http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/blue_growth/index_en.htm.

⁶ Stakeholder workshop in 2011. See also <http://europa.eu/!FR77hx>.

⁷ Black Sea Stakeholder conference 2014. See also <http://europa.eu/!Nt64GB>.

⁸ Blue Growth country and sea-basin report on the Black Sea. See also <http://europa.eu/!GB77nQ>. Study on maritime clusters. See also <http://europa.eu/!Un64nw>.

⁹ Find at: <http://www.emodnet.eu/secretariat>.

¹⁰ OJ L 257/135, 28.8.2014.

¹¹ According to the Black Sea Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) and GFCM.

early adoption of a management plan for turbot and associated species. The EU favours a regional settlement for the management of fish stocks which will be fair and sustainable. Such settlement could be agreed under GFCM since Russia, Ukraine and Georgia are cooperating non-contracting parties to this organisation, and attend regularly the meetings on the Black Sea.

To allow stakeholders to actively participate in the decision-making process, the EU has set in motion a process to create a permanent advisory council (AC) for the Black Sea. Representatives of civil society, producers and public authorities from Bulgaria and Romania are now debating the better exploitation of marine resources.

2.3 Environment

With the accession of Bulgaria and Romania, the EU obtained a direct access to the Black Sea, bringing with it shared responsibilities, and according it a new strategic importance. As a result, EU membership of the Bucharest Convention became a priority. This was reaffirmed by the EU Member States and the European Parliament through the 7th Environmental Action Programme (2013).

Launched in March 2010 at a Ministerial level conference in Brussels, the Environment Partnership under the Synergy produced a number of concrete projects on environmental protection and climate change adaptation, strengthening the environmental governance in the region.

Two environmental monitoring projects aiming to strengthen capacities for biological and chemical monitoring of Black Sea water quality, and covering together all coastal states have been launched since 2012¹². The Environmental Monitoring in the Black Sea region (EMBLAS) project will allow Ukraine, Georgia and Russia to perform environmental monitoring at sea following uniform standards and in line with the requirements of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and the needs of the Black Sea Strategic Action Plan.

A twin project called Guiding Improvements in the Black Sea Integrated Monitoring System (MISIS) helps to protect and restore environmental quality and sustainability of the Black Sea in Romania, Bulgaria and the Republic of Turkey (Turkey). The project aims also to increase the number and size of protected areas in the Black Sea as well as increase, the degree of protection. MISIS is useful to enable Bulgaria and Romania to better meet the requirements of the MSFD. The output of the twin projects will allow an integrated assessment of the state of environment of the Black Sea, including pressures and impacts (in line with Annex II and III of the MSFD).

Other relevant projects implemented in the region and coherent with the Synergy include:

- The Baltic Black project which aimed to transfer good practices on environmental monitoring from the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission, also known as Helsinki Commission (HELCOM) to the Black Sea with focus on nutrients in view of contributing to the Black Sea Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme (BSIMAP) and update the Black Sea Information System.
- Water Sector of the Republic of Moldova: a Pilot Project focusing on adaptation of the Republic of Moldova's drinking water supply and wastewater treatment infrastructure to climate change, in particular for small rural communities has been completed with the involvement of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

¹² Detailed information about the projects EMBLAS and MISIS can be found in the Annex to this report.

- A Black Sea Seabirds Project aims to provide the basis for an inventory of Marine Important Bird Areas (IBAs) for two seabird species. The project supports Romania and Bulgaria in their obligations to designate Marine Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the EU Birds Directive, and also supports the Turkish government to make progress in the environment area as part of its accession negotiations.
- A project on building capacity for a Black Sea Catchment Observation and Assessment System supporting Sustainable Development (ENVIROGRIDS) is contributing to Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) by promoting the use of web-based services to share and process large amounts of key environmental information in the Black Sea catchment.
- Activities addressing protection of the marine environment of the Black and Caspian Seas are being implemented within the framework of the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA) – Maritime Safety and Security II projects¹³.

2.4 Energy

In line with the Synergy, the signature of the Final Investment Decision on 17 December 2013 regarding the development of Shah Deniz II field in Azerbaijan affirmed the significant role and potential of the region as a hub for exploration and development of new energy resources, as well as for development of new supply routes, such as the Southern Gas Corridor. Resulting in initially 10 billion cubic meters per year of gas to be transited from Azerbaijan through to the EU market as of 2020, the project will benefit both the EU and the Black Sea countries.

Important progress has been achieved in the area of legal and regulatory approximation between the countries of the region and the EU in the energy field. A major step in this regard was the accession of the Republic of Moldova (2010) and Ukraine (2011) to the Energy Community. In addition, negotiations for the accession of Georgia to the Energy Community are currently ongoing and Armenia became an observer of the Energy Community in 2011. With the signature of the Association Agreements with Ukraine, Georgia and Republic of Moldova in 2014, further approximation to EU energy legislation will be ensured. Regular contacts with Turkey aim at achieving a similar result.

In March 2013, the EU signed a roadmap on energy cooperation with Russia until 2050 that envisages the creation of pan-European energy market by 2050.

The EU is also supporting energy infrastructure development and modernisation in the Black Sea region. Specific projects include:

- The Black Sea Regional Transmission Network project, completed in December 2013, which supports the development of an electricity grid in the Caucasus through the reinforcement of the Georgian transmission network and the increase in interconnection capacity between Georgia and Turkey. A complementary project aimed at reinforcing the interconnection between Georgia and Armenia is also under consideration.
- The Romania-Republic of Moldova gas interconnector, inaugurated on 27 August 2014 represents the first stage of a project intended to link the Chisinau region to the Romanian gas grid. Regular meetings with the two Governments and the European Financing Institutions are organised by the Commission to facilitate the realisation of

¹³ Detailed information about the Maritime Safety and Security II projects can be found in the Annex to this report.

energy projects aimed at fostering interconnections between Romania and the Republic of Moldova, both in the gas and in the electricity sectors.

2.5 Transport

In the transport field, bilateral transport projects are implemented in individual Black Sea countries (e.g. rail, road, air transport) financed through an array of funds (Neighbourhood Instrument Facility – NIF, Twinning, etc.). These include infrastructure and technical assistance projects. The TRACECA programme provides technical assistance in the areas of infrastructure development, safety and security in transport, logistics and trade facilitation to participating countries. Projects on safety and security have resulted in the adoption by participating countries of the TRACECA Regional Action Strategy on Maritime Safety and Security and Environmental Protection and the TRACECA Regional Road Safety Action Plan (both in November 2011), and continued cooperation in the area of aviation safety. Projects supporting logistics and trade facilitation have resulted in some priority infrastructure projects of regional significance receiving IFI funding and in the selection of potential hubs and pilot projects for logistics centres and Motorways of the Seas on the Black and Caspian Seas. The project ‘Logistic Processes and Motorways of the Sea II’ has developed a Masterplan containing recommendations on how to improve the transport sea links, port management and infrastructure, and the logistics system of the region.

2.6 Managing citizens mobility and improving security

Improving border management and customs cooperation at the regional level are becoming increasingly important. The activities of the SECI regional Centre¹⁴ and the BBCIC¹⁵ are relevant in this regard. Challenges such as illegal migration routes running through the Black Sea region highlight the need for improved regional cooperation in this area.

2.7 Research, science and education networks

2.7.1 Research and Innovation

During the period 2009 – 2014, the EU was active in the Black Sea region in the research and innovation areas notably through the framework programmes for research and innovation FP7 (2007-2013) and Horizon (2014-2020). Republic of Moldova and Turkey, which both have a status of countries associated to FP7 and since 1 January 2014 to Horizon 2020, can participate in the framework programmes under the same conditions as legal entities from the Member States of the EU. Building on the core FP7 principle of openness towards all Black Sea countries, in all fields and areas, the new Horizon 2020 is encouraging researchers, enterprises and institutions from the Black Sea to team up with their European partners to make best use of the opportunities under the framework programme. Various coordination and support actions are being used to step up the cooperation and coordination of research activities carried out at national or regional level in the EU Member States and the Black Sea region.

A recent Conference on "Research and Innovation in the EU Neighbourhood and the Black Sea region" held in Thessaloniki, under the aegis of the Greek presidency, underlined the EU commitment in the region.

¹⁴ South-East European Cooperation Initiative Regional Centre for combating trans-border crime. Based in Bucharest, it has several Black Sea States as observers.

¹⁵ Black Sea Border Coordination and Information Centre based in Burgas. It provides information about illegal activities in the Black Sea region and foster the exchange of information amongst coastguards.

Under FP7, the EU contributed more than EUR 63.1 million to 20 projects with the participation of Black Sea countries. For example, the PERSEUS project explicitly focuses on the impact of climate change on human activities in the Black Sea and the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive in the Black Sea. BS-ERA.NET which ran from January 2009 until December 2012 was a networking project aimed at integrating the participating countries from the Black Sea extended region in the European Research Area (ERA) by linking research activities within existing national, bilateral and regional RTD programmes. It was managed by a consortium of 17 institutions from 13 European countries and received an EU contribution of EUR 2 191 788.

Horizon 2020 provides a wide array of funding opportunities in the research and innovation domain. Its first work programme (2014-2015) included a targeted call for the Black Sea region. The aim was to support policy dialogue and enhance cooperation between researchers from the EU and those from the Black Sea region, including and in particular through Horizon 2020 and the partners' funding programmes.

The Euratom Research and Training Programme (2014-2018) complements Horizon 2020 in the nuclear field. The Euratom Programme is generally open for participation by non-EU Member States, however funding is provided on an exceptional basis. Several countries of the Black Sea region have well-established nuclear research activities and infrastructures. Russia and Ukraine are active partners to Euratom research on nuclear safety and fusion through bilateral cooperation agreements and have participated in nuclear research projects from 2007 until 2013. Moreover, in 2014 Ukraine has expressed interest to become associated to the Euratom Programme. Turkey and some Western Balkan countries have also indicated an interest in participating in the Euratom Programme. Given the fact that Turkey is developing a nuclear energy programme, specific bilateral developments under the Euratom Programme could be expected in the near future.

2.7.2 Science and Education

The European Union has supported student and academic mobility, youth cooperation and mobility and higher education modernisation through its cooperation programmes Erasmus Mundus, Tempus and Youth in Action until 2013. The Erasmus+ programme launched in 2014 is the new framework for cooperation in higher education and youth with Partner countries involved in the Black Sea Synergy Initiative. Jean Monnet activity will continue supporting teaching or research in European integration issues through dedicated Modules, Chairs or Centres of Excellence. Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions will fund mobility and Joint doctoral degrees.

In the area of higher education cooperation, a pre-feasibility study on creating a higher education institution devoted to regional Black Sea and EU studies was undertaken in 2011. As a result of this action, a feasibility study to encourage and support the development of a curriculum on European studies with a focus on the relationships between the EU and the Black Sea region is currently being undertaken.

2.8 Democracy, Civil Society and Youth

The Council of Europe and OSCE have set standards on human rights and democracy which apply to all Black Sea States. EU efforts in this regard are mainly bilateral.

The 2007 Communication proposed that the EU support regional initiatives through sharing experience on measures to promote and uphold human rights and democracy and stimulating a regional dialogue with civil society. The 2008 report of the first year of implementation of the Strategy proposed the creation of a Black Sea Civil Society Forum.

The Black Sea NGO Forum was subsequently launched in 2008, 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 best practice in various domains and success stories of regional cooperation. Since its first edition, the Forum has brought together over 600 participants from NGOs, experts, donors and government representatives from the region. Currently, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Republic of Moldova, Turkey, Ukraine, Romania and Russia participate in. The initiative was launched by the NGO Platform FOND with support from the EU and the Black Sea Trust. Seven editions of the Black Sea NGO Forum have taken place to date.

There are a number of related initiatives including the Black Sea NGO Award for Excellence in promoting regional cooperation in the Black Sea region, and several Black Sea NGO fellowships. Concrete projects of the Black Sea NGO Forum include ChildPact and the setting up of a youth network in the region.

ChildPact¹⁶ is an initiative which came out of the 4th edition of the Black Sea NGO Forum in 2011, when World Vision convened a special panel to discuss the situation of child protection systems in the region, and strategies for sharing knowledge and expertise at regional level. Participants from seven countries agreed that there was much they could learn from each other, and proposed the creation of a regional network for child protection NGOs. ChildPact was thus formed as a response to a common need to improve child protection. Today, ChildPact has 10 member coalitions from 10 countries, representing 600 NGOs working with 500 000 vulnerable children.

During 2012, at the initiative of the National Youth Council of the Republic of Moldova, a new regional project was launched to create a youth network in the Black Sea region. The project involved 9 national youth councils (NYCs) coming from the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Turkey and aimed at fostering cooperation and exchange among the partnered NYCs through study visits, a networking seminar and a research project on youth issues in the Black Sea Region¹⁷.

2.9 Tourism

Since 2009, a number of regional cooperation initiatives have been explored between the countries of the Black Sea region in the field of tourism. While EU support for these countries is primarily bilateral, several projects coherent with the Synergy are beginning to develop a regional dimension to tourism promotion in the region. The Black Sea – Silk Road Corridor (BSSRC) project, for example, launched under the EU-funded Black Sea Cross-Border Cooperation Programme, has been developed to boost economic development along the Black Sea Silk Road trail through Armenia, Georgia, Turkey and Greece, by improving the promotion of local services and products. Other examples include the Limen Project, which aims to contribute to the development of cultural tourism in the wider Black Sea region through the establishment of the “Cultural Port of the Black Sea”; and the project for the creation of a Black Sea Network for Sustainable Tourism Development in Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova and Georgia¹⁸. These projects also fit with the EU's strategic objective to enhance the competitiveness and the sustainable growth of the tourism sector, in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy.

¹⁶ Find at: <http://www.childpact.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/ChildPact-Regional-Cooperation-Brief-April-2013.pdf>.

¹⁷ Find at: <http://www.cntm.md/rapoarte/Study2.pdf>.

¹⁸ These projects were funded under the Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme 2007-2013.

In February 2014, the EU launched a Communication on A Strategy for more Growth and Jobs in Coastal and Maritime Tourism¹⁹ in which it announced its intention to explore links with the Black Sea Synergy in the future, mainly through the promotion of cross-cutting policy elements. The Strategy strives to enhance the competitiveness of the sector, promote skills and innovation, address environmental pressures and mainstream maritime and coastal tourism into EU policies and financial instruments.

2.10 Employment and social affairs

The partner countries of the Black Sea region face similar challenges, including unemployment, a large informal economy, and a range of issues related to a positive working environment, such as social dialogue, social protection, and gender equality. Issues relating to social exclusion and the fight against poverty are also relevant across the region. The EU supports such activities through appropriate technical assistance programmes including within the framework of the ENP Action Plans.

2.11 Trade

The EU is an important economic and trading partner for the countries of the Black Sea region. Through its bilateral and regional activities, the EU supports the efforts of the countries of the region to improve their regulatory framework and overall business environment. The EU has been supportive of efforts by regional cooperation organisations aimed at furthering trade liberalisation. It will be important in the period ahead to ensure compatibility with existing commitments, including in the EU and WTO contexts. The illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula and the continued destabilisation of the Eastern part of Ukraine, has impacted substantially on bilateral EU trade relations with Ukraine and Russia in 2014. While the former deepened its economic and trade ties with the EU, trade relations between the EU and Russia were affected by the business uncertainties linked to situation in Ukraine and the imposition of the Russian trade protectionist measures.

2.12 Cross-border Cooperation

The strategy of the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument-Cross Border Cooperation Black Sea Basin programme (ENPI-CBC)²⁰ is intended to enable authorities around the Black Sea region share experiences and find joint solutions to common challenges. The CBC Black Sea basin Program was officially launched at the end of 2008. Following the first call for proposals, a series of projects began in mid-2011. Following the second call for proposals, 41 new projects were contracted. There are currently almost 60 projects being implemented. Over 60 % of projects are in the area of economic and social development, while the rest cover environmental protection and cultural/education cooperation. The Programme budget has been continuously increased due to the need to cover a growing number of projects, technical assistance needs and management costs demonstrating the effectiveness of the programme.

¹⁹ COM (2014) 86 final.

²⁰ Eligible regions: Romania: South East; Bulgaria: Severoiztochen, Yugoiztochen; Greece: Kentriki Makedonia, Anatoliki Makedonia Thraki; Turkey: Istanbul, Tekirdağ, Kocaeli, Zonguldak, Kastamonu, Samsun, Trabzon; Russia: Rostov Oblast, Krasnodar Krai, Adygea republic; Ukraine: Odessa, Mykolaiv, Kherson, Zaporosh'ye and Donetsk Oblasts, Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan: the whole country. Managing Authority: Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism, Romania.

3 Working with regional/international organisations

3.1 Cooperation with Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation (BSEC)

The EU has been a permanent observer at BSEC since 2007. Since 2009, cooperation between EU and BSEC has been strengthened through enhanced EU participation at BSEC high level meetings. The Commissioner for maritime affairs and fisheries participated at the BSEC 20th Anniversary Summit in June 2012. The Summit Declaration highlighted the importance of enhanced and mutually beneficial cooperation between the EU and BSEC. The activities of the EU at bilateral and regional level in the Black Sea contribute in many perspectives to the achievements of the goals set in the BSEC Economic Agenda approved at the Summit. The EU has participated in all of the BSEC Ministerial and Senior Officials meetings. Since 2011, an informal yearly meeting has taken place between the BSEC Open Trilateral and COEST Working Party representatives. A number of meetings have taken place – in Brussels and Istanbul – between the BSEC Permanent Secretariat and the EU..

3.2 EU accession to the Bucharest Convention

EU accession to the Bucharest Convention is a short to medium term priority based on the strategy for the progressive improvement of the EU's status in international organisations and other fora in line with the objectives of the Treaty of Lisbon²¹. The Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (Black Sea Commission or BSC) is the intergovernmental body established in implementation of the Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (Bucharest Convention). The EU has been an observer at the BSC since 2001. Since the early 1990s, the EU has been providing substantial technical and financial support for the protection of the Black Sea marine and coastal environment through a variety of projects, notably the project on Environmental Monitoring of the Black Sea Basin (MONINFO). Membership to the Bucharest Convention would enable participation in decision-making which is proportionate to this contribution and, more generally, will provide the EU with a platform to enhance its engagement still further.

3.3 Cooperation with the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean

The General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), to which the EU and its Black Sea Member States are members, established in 2011 a Working Group to facilitate delivering advice for fisheries management in the Black Sea and to promote regional cooperation in the field of fisheries and environmental issues. Together with the GFCM members Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania, and the non-GFCM cooperating members Ukraine, Russia and Georgia, the EU has been actively participating in discussions related to the state of marine fauna in the Black Sea in 2012 and 2013. GFCM has been invited to participate as an observer in all Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) Expert Working groups on Black Sea stock assessments. The GFCM is currently working on the establishment of a new data collection scheme, the Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF). Harmonisation of GFCM requirements with the currently running EU Data Collection Framework (DCF) and national data collection systems is under consideration²² and further collaboration towards achieving this goal is anticipated.

4 Lessons learnt

Fostering a partnership approach: The impact of EU assistance in the region will remain limited unless it is matched by commitment from the littoral countries. Whether in the area of

²¹ COM (2012) 9420 final.

²² [Report of the Workshop on fisheries data collection in the Black Sea, Varna, Bulgaria, 22-23 April 2013.](#)

fisheries or marine environment, weak political commitment is the primary obstacle to greater integration. The implementation of EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive principles, for instance, can be efficient only if carried out in cooperation through the Black Sea Commission. Generating commitment entails increased transparency, dialogue, and the sharing of information and knowledge. Building on the existing framework of regional conventions and political fora must continue, with a focus on improving their governance.

Increasing stakeholder participation: Bridging the gap between high-level political commitments and their actual implementation at the lower administrative and community levels, requires increased stakeholder participation. In the area of transport and environment, for instance, projects and capacity-building measures currently tend to target primarily public administrations and officials and engage less directly with other stakeholders²³. To enhance the creation of business opportunities and long-term investments, there is a need for closer involvement of regional industry and employers' representatives, academia and training institutes. Due account should be given to the transformative role civil societies play in the process of policy definition and implementation, as well as in measuring their success.

Enhancing synergies and coherence between interventions: The Black Sea offers a platform for numerous projects and initiatives related to the sea, including in the area of logistics, environmental protection, climate action and energy. More could be done to ensure greater coherence and synergies between these projects, notably between those financed by the EU. Currently, a number of financial instruments are supporting on-going initiatives in the region. However, EU actions in the region do not often receive sufficient visibility, in part due to resource constraints and the need to coordinate various financial frameworks.

Improving data collection and dissemination: One of the main challenges for policy-makers dealing with the Black Sea basin is the limited availability of accurate reliable and comparable marine and maritime data. Recent studies indicate that valuable data collection is already taking place on a regional basis. On the other hand, there are a number of sources of privately held data, and also cases where the use of required data is subject to payment. One significant example relates to data on oil and gas installations. ----- greater efforts

Enhancing social and cultural dialogue: Coastal tourism makes a substantial, if not the largest contribution, to the blue economy in the countries around the Black Sea. Despite the efforts of the littoral States and targeted funding by the Black Sea CBC programme, its potential to offer innovative solutions remains rather low. On the other hand, a common cultural heritage is the strongest bond between the Black Sea communities and countries. Forms of alternative tourism and products need to be developed. According to UNWTO around 37% of tourists include cultural considerations in their travel plans²⁴. Efforts to further pan-regional cultural tourism, including the restoration, reconstruction and conservation of cultural monuments, would result in economic benefit to the region as a whole.

Flexible cooperation framework and design: Case studies²⁵ carried out on key cooperation projects revealed that the overall impact of environmental projects is often reduced due to the lack of response from some partners. Experience from the transport programme TRACECA, however, illustrates that individual projects can be successful without necessarily including all partners of the Black Sea region. With the changing political situation across the sea-basin a flexible approach should be factored into both policy and programme design, allowing partners to opt in and out depending on their willingness, capacity and readiness to participate.

²³ Blue Growth country and sea-basin report on the Black Sea. See also: <http://europa.eu/!GB77nQ>.

²⁴ Find at: http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/events/2014/03/doc/guerir-presentation_en.pdf.

²⁵ Blue Growth country and sea-basin report on the Black Sea. See also: <http://europa.eu/!GB77nQ>.

Regular coordination with regional and international organisations from the region:

Participation at high level meetings and at working groups contribute to EU visibility in the region. The EU is a permanent observer to the BSEC and the BSC. EU accession to the Bucharest Convention remains an important priority.

Sectoral cooperation. Environment, civil society, cross-border cooperation, maritime affairs and fisheries, research and innovation, education offer good examples of enhanced regional cooperation during 2009-2014.

5 Conclusions

The results of the Black Sea Synergy to date reveal the practical utility and the potential of this EU regional policy approach. The Black Sea Synergy will remain a bottom-up initiative geared towards strengthening regional cooperation via concrete projects making the best possible use of the wide range of tools at the EU's disposal. An important goal is to bring added value to the citizens of the region while ensuring environmental sustainability.

Experience in recent years demonstrates that EU-supported for the development of Black Sea regional cooperation is taking place in a complex environment, especially in the present geopolitical context. Continued progress requires the consistent and active involvement of a growing number of actors, including both EU Member States and Black Sea Partner countries.

Annex: Further information on the main facts, cooperation initiatives and projects

1 Black Sea in facts and figures (2009 – 2013)

The Black Sea region covers six coastal countries, one state with a port on the Danube Delta and, at least, two adjacent countries (i.e. Armenia, Azerbaijan)²⁶. It lies at numerous crossroads involving historical, geopolitical and economical aspects as well as uniting different cultures, and civilisations between the West, the Middle East and Eurasia. The wider Black Sea region is also structurally heterogeneous, as is illustrated by the aspirations and affiliations each country shares with the EU and other regional and international organisations

The sea is an important source of economic activity for the region, including in the areas of transport, tourism and energy. Other areas also have a cross-regional dimension, and benefit from increased cooperation at regional level, including protection of the environment, and cross-border cooperation in the area of social development, and cultural and educational cooperation.

1.1 Transport and Energy

Based on the gross weight of goods transported, 6.4% of short-sea shipping in Europe occurs in the Black Sea (in 2010)²⁷. While the sector has been affected by the recent economic crisis, it is expected that maritime traffic will eventually continue to expand further as a result of increased transportation needs for passengers and goods, including energy resources. With regard to energy, Azerbaijan and Russia are two important actors, both in the gas and in the oil sector. Their proven reserves amount to respectively 1 and 33 trillion cubic meters of natural gas and to 7 and 87 thousand million barrels of oil²⁸. They are also major energy trade partners for the EU: Russia is the first exporter of both oil (35% of total EU imports) and gas (30%), while Azeri oil represents 5% of total EU imports and its role as gas supplier will increase in the future²⁹. The Black Sea region has also the potential to develop production of energy from renewable sources, including hydro, solar and wind power. A range of projects are under consideration or development, including the construction of new pipelines and offshore gas exploration facilities, and the upgrading of existing ports to meet increased traffic and energy demands.

1.2 Environment

The Black Sea is highly sensitive to anthropogenic impacts due to the huge catchment area and almost landlocked nature. A large part of the sea water is naturally anoxic meaning that marine life is absent at depths beyond 150–200m, with the exception of a few anaerobic bacteria. In addition to nutrient pollution, pressures on the Black Sea ecosystems include organic compounds such as pesticides and other persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals, incidental and operational spills from oil vessels and ports, over-fishing and invasions of exotic species. Such factors have radically changed Black Sea ecosystems, seriously threatening biodiversity and the use of the sea for fishing and recreation. As an important

²⁶ The region comprises EU Member States Bulgaria, Greece and Romania, the candidate country Turkey and ENP partners Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, as well as Russia.

²⁷ Find at

http://www.espon.eu/export/sites/default/Documents/Projects/AppliedResearch/ESaTDOR/FR_160413/20130417_annexes/ESaTDOR_FR_Annex_5_Black_Sea_Profile.pdf

²⁸ BP Statistical review of world energy, June 2013

²⁹ Based on Eurostat data, April 2013

example, the bluefin tuna disappeared completely from the Black Sea, even from Turkish waters close to the Bosphorus, in 1988³⁰.

1.3 Legal

Most Black Sea littoral states (with the exception of Turkey) are signatories to the [UN Law of the Sea Convention](#) (UNCLOS). There are no high seas waters in the Black Sea as all the countries have declared Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs). There are, however, problems of control as well as border delimitation which lead to political tensions in the region. The sea is the subject of numerous international and regional conventions³¹.

2 EU involvement and assistance

2.1 Cross-border cooperation

The ENPI-CBC Black Sea Basin programme is consistent with the EU Black Sea Synergy contributing to its cooperation sectors with a clear focus on civil society and local level cross-border cooperation, aiming additionally to foster consistency with other national and transnational programmes and strategies. Russia and Azerbaijan, however, decided not to participate in the first call for proposals of the programme. (Russia because of lack of influence and Azerbaijan because of the conflict with Armenia) The first call for proposal resulted in contracting of 18 projects which have already been implemented. The second call closed in 2012 (with almost 400 submitted proposals) with another 30 projects being contracted. The total ENPI budget allocation for 2007-2013 period exceeded EUR 28.1 million (EUR 18.305 million + EUR 9.8 million increase + EUR 7 million IPA contribution for Turkey's participation³²) and it was depleted after the closure of the 2nd call for proposals. A mid-term evaluation³³ of the ENPI CBC concluded that the programme is complementary with other initiatives and consistent with EU strategies, and it is filling a gap that has not been picked up through other initiatives including other EU initiatives or Member State initiatives. The programme will continue under the ENI 2014-2020.

2.2 Integrated maritime policy

Since 2008, the Integrated Maritime Policy³⁴ (IMP) of the EU is set to enable better coordination and coherence between the sectors related to the sea with view to develop a sea-basin approach. It aims at supporting sustainable development, economic growth and social cohesion in the EU Member States – particularly coastal regions across all European seas, and it is also open to non-EU Member States with genuine interest in the sea. This integrated approach also contributes to better protect the marine environment by facilitating the cooperation of all maritime players across sectors and borders. Since 2012, the IMP has focused on Blue Growth, which aims to support sustainable growth in the marine and maritime economy, including in the Black Sea.

In line with the Synergy, the Commission held a Brainstorming event³⁵ on the Black Sea with public authorities and stakeholders from Romania and Bulgaria to discuss the Black Sea

³⁰ Find at: http://www.iccat.int/documents/cvsp/cv065_2010/no_3/cv065031004.pdf.

³¹ Such as International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973 (MARPOL), International Convention on Safety of Life at Sea, 1974 (SOLAS-74) (Regulation SOLAS-74/V.7.1), International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue, 1979 (Regulation SAR-79/2.1.1), Bucharest Convention, 1992, and others.

³² IPA funds for Turkey amount to EUR 1 million per year for the period 2007-2009.

³³ Find at: <http://www.blacksea-cbc.net/index.php/eng/News/News-Archive/Final-report-for-the-mid-term-evaluation-of-cross-border-cooperation-CBC-programmes-under-the-European-Neighbourhood-and-Partnership-instrument-ENPI>.

³⁴ Find at: http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/index_en.htm.

³⁵ Find at: http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/events/2011/10/events_20111014_en.htm.

priority areas of cooperation. Through the Black Sea Stakeholder Conference on 30 January 2014 held in Bucharest this dialogue encompassed the whole sea basin with the objective to discuss maritime affairs and fisheries with stakeholders and Ministers from all six coastal countries and the Republic of Moldova to explore stronger cooperation across the countries on the development of the marine and maritime sector in the region. As a follow-up, Commissioner Maria Damanaki announced the Commission's intention to set a dedicated project which will help national, regional and local authorities, particularly in the Synergy partner countries, to develop Integrated Maritime Policy approaches in their policies and help them to reap the economic opportunities of the sea³⁶.

2.3 Fisheries

The EU has been working along three major axes: improvement of dialogue with all countries bordering the Black Sea, reinforcing the control and enforcement in the Region with a view to tackle against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) practices and continue promoting the scientific cooperation.

Black Sea dialogue:

- The Commission has actively participated in the first and second meetings of the Ad hoc GFCM Working Group for the Black Sea held in Constanta (Romania) in January 2012 and in Varna (Bulgaria) in April 2013.
- An EU proposal for a GFCM recommendation on the establishment of a set of binding measures for the bottom-set gillnets fisheries for turbot in the Black Sea were adopted during the 37th annual session of the GFCM (Split, 13-17 May 2013). For the first time ever management measures concerning the Black Sea were adopted in the GFCM framework.
- Discussions with Russia and Turkey, in the framework of the respective fisheries dialogue meetings, are progressing.

Control and enforcement:

- The Commission, in cooperation with the European Fisheries Control Agency, has ensured that concerned Member States (Romania and Bulgaria) establish adequate control and monitoring plans.
- Other countries in the region (e.g. Turkey and Ukraine) were invited to follow a similar approach in order to combat illegal fishing in the Black Sea. Both countries responded positively to the invitation.

Scientific cooperation:

- As in previous years an expert working group of the STECF has met in autumn (2014) and assessed the most important Black Sea stocks. The participation in this exercise included independent scientists from Turkey and Ukraine. The overexploitation of most stocks observed over the last years has been confirmed again.
- The Regional Coordination Meeting for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea held annually in the context of the Data Collection Framework (DCF) is devoted to harmonise methodologies for the collection of fisheries data. Turkey, Ukraine, Georgia and Russia will be invited to the next meeting to be held in Romania in early September 2013. Their participation would be a first step towards the establishment of international stock assessments surveys at sea at the level of the whole Black Sea.

³⁶ Find at: http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/events/2014/01/events_20140130_01_en.htm.

2.4 Environment

There are the two on-going initiatives funded by the EU covering all Black Sea countries: the project "Improving environmental monitoring in the Black Sea", funded by the EU and by the UNDP, and the project "Towards a Shared Environmental Information System" (SEIS) covering the European Neighbourhood as a whole. This last project will be followed by a project funded in 2014 which will continue SEIS activities in the six Eastern Neighbourhood partner countries.

[Improving environmental monitoring in the Black Sea](#) (EMBLAS)

The project is managed by the Commission. Its first phase (2013-2014) represented a preparatory action financed under the ENPI Regional Action Plan 2012 with a total budget of EUR 600 000 over a 24 months implementation period. On top of this amount, UNDP as an implementing partner will provide a USD 600 000 worth additional contribution.

This initiative was followed by a full scale project whose implementation started in mid-2014 with a EUR 2.5 million budget. This figure is supplemented by a USD 300 000 contribution by UNDP. The duration of phase II is 3 years. The overall objective of these projects is to set up initiatives that will help improve the protection of the Black Sea environment. More specifically, the project aims to improve (a) availability and quality of data on the chemical and biological status of the Black Sea, in line with expected Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) and Black Sea Strategic Action Plan needs and (b) partner countries' ability to perform marine environmental monitoring along the MSFD principles, taking into account the Black Sea Diagnostic Report. Partner countries are Georgia, Russia and Ukraine.

The Improving Environmental Monitoring in the Black Sea project is also complementary to the Environmental Protection of International River Basins (EPIRB), launched in 2012 for a period of 4 years and a EUR 7.5 million budget. The specific objectives of this project are as follows: a) to improve availability and quality of data on the ecological, chemical, and hydro-morphological status of trans-boundary river basins including groundwater, b) to develop River Basin Management Plans for selected river basins / sub-river basins according to the requirements of the WFD. The project covers the 6 EaP countries, thus including Ukraine, where the project office is based.

[MISIS project](#)

Alongside the EMBLAS project, the Commission had launched a similar call for proposals that ended with the award of the contract to a consortium led by the Grigore Antipa (Romania) - [MISIS project](#). The EUR 800 000 worth project targets Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey starting from 2012 and complements the EMBLAS project's geographical scope, thus covering the whole Black Sea region.

Other projects and initiatives:

[ENPI-SEIS](#)

UNECE is, under SEIS, working with the ENP East countries (and Russia) in charge of the development of a core set of indicators. Indicators and reports have been produced and are available on line. A bilateral meeting on cooperation with the Black Sea Commission Permanent Secretariat (BSCPS) was organised in Istanbul on 24-25 May 2012. This meeting was seen as a first step to establish the basis for regular dialogue and future collaboration. Such collaboration, with a view to taking due account of marine and coastal environment, is expected to be strengthened in the follow-up of the [ENPI-SEIS](#) project.

[MONINFO](#)

Among the completed projects, the [MONINFO](#) project can be seen as a good example of cooperation between the Black Sea countries in joining efforts and working together towards reduction/elimination of oil pollution in the Black Sea. Despite the fact that in the end, the countries couldn't agree where physically to place the server required to support the system, the two-phased project proved that on the technical level there are no obstacles to set up effective information and data exchange mechanisms among competent authorities for prevention of and response to oil pollution from ships in the Black Sea.

2.5 Transport

The transport strand of the EU Black Sea policy is mainly represented by the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia ([TRACECA](#)) Programme. It was launched in 1993 to develop a transport corridor from Europe to China, via the Black Sea, the Caucasus, the Caspian Sea and Central Asia. The main aim of the programme is to strengthen economic relations, trade and transport links between the EU and the programme's participating countries. The participating countries are: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

Until 2014, the EU has supported this cooperation with technical assistance with a total of almost EUR 186 million for more than 80 projects in the areas of infrastructure development, safety and security in transport as well as trade facilitation and logistics. Since 2004, EU funded technical assistance projects have mostly focused on transport safety and security, legal harmonisation initiatives, trade facilitation and institutional support including training. To be noted that Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey do not receive funds from the assistance programme but participate in all project activities as "indirect beneficiaries".

EU projects on safety and security in transport have resulted in the adoption by the countries of a TRACECA Regional Action Strategy on Maritime Safety and Security and Environmental Protection in November 2011, and a Regional Road Safety Action Plan also in November 2011. Projects supporting trade facilitation and logistics have resulted in the selection of potential hubs and pilot projects for logistics centres and Motorways of the Seas on the Black and Caspian Seas. The Commission is following-up on the implementation of the Programme.

Among the on-going TRACECA programme projects related to maritime transport in the sea basin, three emerge as having a particular relevance for the region: "Logistics Processes and Motorways of the Seas", the "Maritime Safety and Security II" and the "Transport Dialogue and Networks Interoperability II".

[Logistics Processes and Motorways of the Seas](#)³⁷

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to the long-term sustainable development of the logistics infrastructure and multimodal transport along the TRACECA corridor. The assignment will enhance the development and implementation of coherent strategies for establishment of intermodal integrated transport and logistics chains underpinned by Motorways of the Seas.

An important delivery constitutes the Master Plan. This Plan should indicate the priority projects, hard infrastructure as well as soft (trade facilitation) measures, on the medium term that can contribute to improved cargo sea and hinterland connections, in full compatibility with the revised TEN-T guidelines. The (political) commitment of the individual involved countries forms an important dimension.

³⁷ Between 2011 – 2014 the budget allocation amounts to EUR 5,2 million .

Specific reference can be made to the recent Silk Wind project, promoted and supported by the LOGMOS project. This project aims at ensuring a competitive container block train connection between the Chinese border and the EU, over Kazakhstan, the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey. In November 2012, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the Ministers of Transport of the four involved countries, pledging cooperative efforts for realising this transport corridor (besides hard infrastructure, specific focus on trade facilitation measures, e.g. harmonization of customs procedures, etc.).

[Maritime Safety and Security II](#)³⁸

This project continues the work done by the previous Maritime Safety and Security project which ended in December 2011. The project started on 12 January 2012 and will last for 3 years.

The overall objective is to support the further ratification and implementation of international maritime safety and security conventions as well as improving the level of quality of maritime administrations in the Black and Caspian Seas partner countries with the overall objective of making shipping safer, more secure and environment friendly. This should promote the further alignment of the maritime safety and security legislation with the relevant EU acquis in the field and especially with the EU's Third Maritime Safety Package. Despite being a regional project, the programme should focus also on specific needs at national level of each beneficiary country by taking into account the level of improvement of the maritime administration over the past years and keeping in mind the different bilateral assistance provided to some of the beneficiary countries.

[Transport Dialogue and Networks Interoperability II](#)³⁹

This project follows the previous transport dialogue and networks interoperability project that expired in November 2012. The implementation period started on 16 January 2013, and will last for 3 years.

The overall objective is to provide technical support to the beneficiary countries to improve the connection between the Trans-European Transport Network and EU's Eastern neighbours and Central Asian countries. This project will contribute to the achievement of the policy objectives defined in the Commission Communication on transport relations with the European Neighbourhood Policy countries. Particular emphasis is to be put on improving coordination with and involvement of IFIs and participation of the private sector in transport projects.

2.6 Energy

The EU maintains close bilateral cooperation with all countries in the BS region. In addition, it supports a number of regional initiatives relevant for the Black Sea region, including:

- [The Energy Community which](#) extends the EU internal energy policy to South East Europe and some countries in the Black Sea region on the ground of a legally binding framework. The overall objective is to create integrated energy markets, attract investments in generation and infrastructure, enhance security of supply, and improve the environmental situation in relation with energy supply. Republic of Moldova and Ukraine are members of the Energy Community, while Armenia, Georgia and Turkey are observers. Negotiations for the accession of Georgia are currently ongoing.

³⁸ Between 2012 – 2015 the budget allocation amounts to EUR 3 million.

³⁹ Between 2012 – 2015 the budget allocation amounts to EUR 3.5 million.

- The Southern Gas Corridor is an EU Project of Common Interest which will link the Caspian region gas resources to the EU market. This corridor involves currently a series of pipelines crossing Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, Greece, Albania to Italy and will greatly enhance the security of supply of all countries involved as well as the countries of South East Europe. In addition to the current route, the Southern Gas Corridor includes other gas transportation options proposed by certain promoters and countries in the region, such as the White Stream (gas pipeline through the Black Sea) and AGRI (piped gas from Azerbaijan to Georgia followed by LNG transport through the Black Sea).
- The so called "Baku Initiative" is a forum for energy cooperation launched at Ministerial level between the countries of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea in 2004. The Baku initiative is supported by the [INOGATE programme](#), an international energy co-operation programme between the EU and Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. INOGATE provides technical assistance to the countries in the field of electricity/gas, sustainable energy and energy statistics. The new INOGATE Secretariat project (2012-2015) includes an ad-hoc expert facility. The Programme is steered by nominated representatives in each Partner Country. The INOGATE Technical Secretariat serves as a coordination mechanism for supporting the energy cooperation.

In view of the above existing regional frameworks and initiatives on energy cooperation, the energy cooperation under the Black Sea Synergy has taken up a lesser priority in recent years.

2.7 Civil Society involvement

The EU activities in the region bring an added value to the development and reinforcement of the civil society. Through public consultations, stakeholders' events and targeted mission in the respective countries, EU officials raise awareness about the policy initiatives at EU level, meet stakeholders to listen to their needs and suggestions with immediate relevance to the dossier, ensure coherence and transparency in the actions, build trust and exchange on the latest developments.

The latest public consultation launched by the Commission and concerning the Black Sea littoral states was the Green Paper consultation on the "Marine Knowledge 2020" initiative. The purpose was to learn more about stakeholders' opinions on options for future governance of the initiative and on the possible involvement of the private sector. The consultation was closed on 15 December 2012. A total of 244 replies were received (29 from civil society, 43 from the private sector, 95 from the public sector and 77 from the research community) from 30 countries, including some from outside the EU whose waters touch those of Member States. Many of the submissions, especially those from national governments, had endured an extensive internal consultation process and, therefore, represented the balanced views of many organisations. This was considered a representative sample. A more open access to data through the [European Marine Observation and Data Network](#) (EMODNET) will increase public responsibility and accountability and make civil society an informed sine qua non partner in decisions that affects our seas and coasts.

On the fisheries side, on the other hand, the EU is currently working on putting in place a Black Sea Advisory Council (Target: 2015). The last meeting in June 2013 took place in Brussels and gathered participants from the administrations, fishing sectors and NGOs from BG and RO as well as a representative from the Long Distance RAC and one from WWF in Brussels. Altogether: 25 people. Rich on interventions from all sides around the table, the meeting was constructive and positive, providing the Commission with valuable information

on the challenges and opportunities the stakeholders of Black Sea fisheries sector are facing and reveal the level of cooperation among the stakeholders. Even though the involvement of private stakeholders and members of civil society in the policy-making process at national level is considered still low, the EU works towards improving the culture of consultation at regulatory level as the most democratic and efficient way to improve quality of regulation and ensure compliance among the affected parties.

Concerning the Black Sea NGO Forum, the various editions of this gathering of NGOs has focused on:

- “Time to meet!” - 1st edition, October 31st- November 2nd 2008, Bucharest, Romania. The major aim of the first edition of the Black Sea NGO Forum was to increase the level of dialogue and mutual knowledge among NGOs in the wider Black Sea region. The Forum gathered more than 220 participants representing over 100 NGOs from the region.
- “NGOs in Times of Crisis” – 2nd edition, October 29th- 31st 2009, Bucharest, Romania. This edition of the Forum included more space for discussion and participation - 2 series of 5 parallel panels, on topics such as: democracy & human rights; environment; children rights; advocacy & policy; financial sustainability; volunteering & citizen participation. Study-visits to Romanian NGOs were organized for the participants in order to help them become better acquainted with the contribution of local civil society to the process of transition and reforms before and during the accession to the EU. Over 180 participants from 21 countries attended the event.
- “Investing in Our Common Future” – 3rd edition, October 21st- 23rd 2010, Constanța, Romania. The objectives of the 3rd edition of the Forum were: to share information and analysis on the status of civil society development in the region, to discuss common issues of concern, to share good practices, to identify potential partners and joint action ideas, to make recommendations to the NGO community, national and international actors. Over 140 participants from 20 countries attended the event, representing NGOs, public authorities, donor organizations and other international actors.
- “Building a common vision” – 4th edition, October 6th- 8th 2011, Bucharest, Romania. The 4th edition of the Black Sea NGO Forum gathered around 250 participants from various countries from the region who debated on the main regional issues and trying to find common solutions to the current local and regional problems. Among the topics discussed were: the European Neighbourhood Policy and the place of the Black Sea Region in the European Union’s regional cooperation policy. Also, thematic issues such as civil society leadership; democratic transition; advocacy in the social field; child protection; policy thinking & shaping in the Black Sea Region, education, environment were discussed, with the 3rd day of the Forum dedicated to donors' and institutions' perspectives on the region.
- “Participation and inclusion for responsible development” – 5th edition, October 24th-25th 2012, Bucharest, Romania. This edition was focused on participation and inclusion, addressing topics such as: social entrepreneurship and social inclusion, community mobilization, youth participation to the decision-making process. Among the participants were representatives of parliaments from the region, European institutions, civil society, experts and mass-media.
- “Building Sustainable and Effective Regional Cooperation” – 6th edition, September 4th-6th 2013, Bucharest, Romania. This edition’s objective was to explore the ways in which civil society can contribute to the sustainability and effectiveness of regional cooperation in the extended Black Sea area, as well as offer the opportunity to share

experience and good practices with other regional cooperation initiatives such as those of the Baltic and Mediterranean Seas. Moreover, the last day of the Forum was dedicated to the Non-EU sub-regional meeting - CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE). On this occasion, participants were informed about the principles of CSO Development Effectiveness, the areas of work of CPDE, its governance structure and working groups.

Annex II: Acronyms and abbreviations

AC Fisheries regional Advisory Council

AGRI Azerbaijan-Georgia-Romania-Interconnection gas transportation network

BBCIC Black Sea Border Coordination and Information Centre

BS Black Sea

BSC Black Sea Commission or Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea Against Pollution (also known as Bucharest Convention)

BSCPS Black Sea Commission Permanent Secretariat

BSEC Organisation for the Black Sea Economic Cooperation

BS-ERA.NET Black Sea European Research Area Network

BSIMAP Black Sea Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme

BSS Black Sea Synergy

BSSRC Black Sea - Silk Road Corridor

CBC Cross-Border Cooperation Programme

ChildPact Child Protection Pact (Regional coalition for child protection in the wider Black Sea)

COEST European Council Working Party on Eastern Europe and Central Asia

CPDE CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness

CSO Committee of Senior Officials

DCF Data Collection Framework

EaP Eastern Partnership

EEA European Environment Agency

EEAS European External Action Service

EEZ Exclusive Economic Zone

EIB European Investment Bank

EMBLAS Environmental Monitoring in the Black Sea region

EMODnet European Marine Observation and Data Network

ENI European Neighbourhood Instrument

ENPI European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument

ENPI-SEIS Shared Environment Information System

ENVIROGRIDS Black Sea Catchment Observation and Assessment System supporting Sustainable Development

EPIRB Environmental Protection of International River Basins

ERA European Research Area

Erasmus+ European Union Programme in the fields of education, training, youth and sport (2014-2020)

ESIF European Structural and Investment Funds

EU European Union

EUR Euro

EUSAIR EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region

EUSDR EU Strategy for the Danube Region

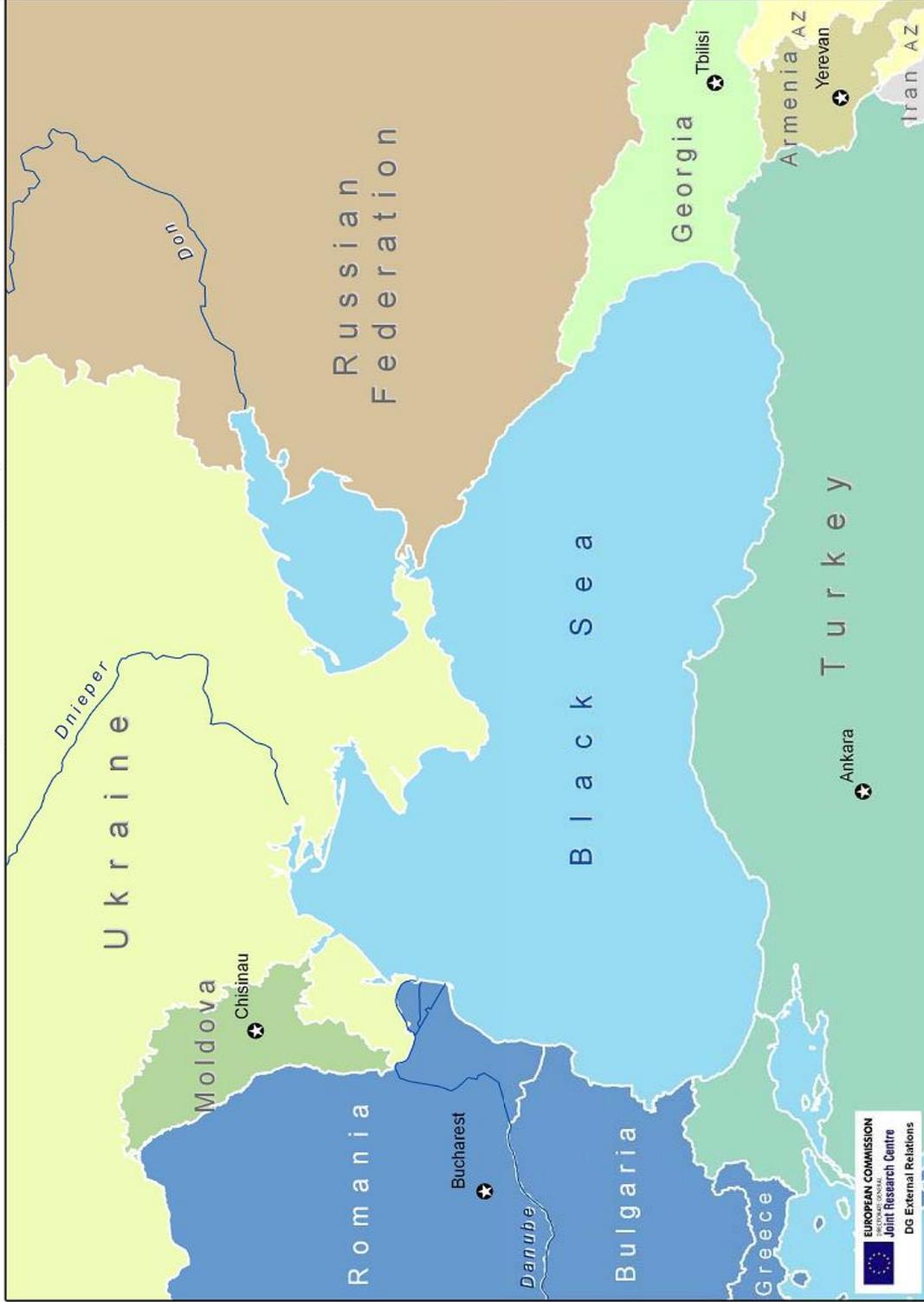
FP7 Framework programs for research and innovation (2007-2013)

GEF Global Environment Facility

GEOSS Global Earth Observation System of Systems
GFCM General Fisheries Council for the Mediterranean
GVA Gross Value Added
HELCOM Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission (Helsinki Commission)
Horizon 2020 EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014 – 2020)
IBA Marine Important Bird Areas
ICBSS International Centre for Black Sea Studies
IFI International Financing Institution
IMO International Maritime Organization
IMP Integrated Maritime Policy
IMP-MED Integrated Maritime Policy – Mediterranean (project)
INOGATE Interstate Oil and Gas Transport to Europe
INSPIRE Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community
IPA Instrument for pre-accession
IUU Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing
JOP Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme
JRC Joint Research Centre
LNG Liquefied natural gas
LOGMOS EU project Logistics Processes and Motorways of the Sea
MISIS MSFD Guiding Improvements in the Black Sea Integrated Monitoring System
MONINFO Monitoring and Information Systems for Reducing Oil Pollution
MoS Motorways of the Sea
MSFD Marine Strategy Framework Directive
MSP Maritime Spatial Planning
NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO non-governmental organization
NIF EU Neighbourhood Investment Facility
NYC National Youth Council
OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SECI South-East European Cooperation Initiative
SEIS Shared Environment Information System
SPAs Marine Special Protection Areas
STECF Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries
TA Technical Assistance
TACIS Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States
TEN-T Trans-European Networks –Transport
TEU Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit
TRACECA Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia
UNECE United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNCLOS UN Law of the Sea Convention
UNDP United Nations Development Programme
UNEP United Nations Environment Program
UNWTO United Nations World Tourism Organization
USD United States Dollars

WFD Water Framework Directive
White Stream Gas pipeline through the Black Sea
WTO World Trade Organisation

Annex II - Black Sea Country Map



MapID: 1490
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Scale 1:9,000,000 for A4 printing ; Projection: World Mercator ; Source: Gaull Administrative dataset (Reference 2006)