



# EU supports better cooperation in the Black Sea region for sustainable green development

- The **European Union's** maritime boundaries reached the shores of the Black Sea in 2007 with the accession of Bulgaria and Romania.
- In the same year, the EU launched the **Black Sea Synergy** initiative for developing deeper regional cooperation involving **Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Romania, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Turkey** and **Ukraine**.
- With the support of the EU, Black Sea countries are developing their **blue economies**, with a particular focus on **marine research and innovation, and preservation of the marine environment**.

**Blue economy** – All economic activities related to oceans, seas and coasts. It covers a wide range of interlinked sectors, such as aquaculture, fisheries, shipbuilding, coastal tourism, marine extraction of oil and gas, maritime transport, wind and ocean energy and biotechnology, in harmony with environmental protection. The blue economy represents a crucial economic sector for prosperity and employment in Europe and its neighbourhood. It can greatly contribute to achieving the objectives of the European Green Deal.

**Since 2015**, the EU has invested over € 50 million in supporting the blue economy of the region focusing on maritime affairs related topics, supporting the fisheries sector and the community of scientists working on marine research and innovation.

**Maritime policy:**  
€ 11 million

**Fisheries:**  
€ 4.9 million

**Research and innovation:**  
at least € 36 million

## Timeline

- **2016** Bucharest Declaration “Towards Enhanced Cooperation on Black Sea Fisheries and Aquaculture”
- **2018** Sofia Ministerial Declaration on Black Sea Fisheries and Aquaculture
- **2019** Adoption of Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda for the Black Sea
- **2019** Adoption of Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea
- **2019** Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions on EU’s engagement to the Black Sea regional cooperation

## PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

### *Sustainable Blue Economy*



The **Black Sea Virtual Knowledge Centre (BSVVC)** has been launched in September 2020 and its objective is to support the implementation of the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea. The BSVVC will function as a one-stop shop for the Black Sea stakeholders, providing a centralised platform for information on the blue economy in the Black Sea and supporting synergies between stakeholders and blue economy projects in the region. Concrete activities include awareness raising actions on cooperation opportunities in blue economy sectors, support to complementarities with existing regional initiatives/ organisations and network and implementation of fine-tuned dissemination activities.  
[www.bsec-bsvkc.org](http://www.bsec-bsvkc.org)

The **Facility for Blue Growth in the Black Sea** provided guidance and support to public authorities and stakeholders in the coastal countries, including in the Republic of Moldova, helping them unlock the potential of the blue economy. The project supported the endorsement of the 21 May 2019 Bucharest Declaration on the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea.

The implementation of the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea was launched in February 2020 and its **Assistance Mechanism** in October 2020, which represents the continuation of the Facility for Blue Growth. Via dedicated national hubs and specific support at regional level, the Assistance Mechanism will assist the Common Maritime Agenda national coordinators and stakeholders in implementing the Common Maritime Agenda.  
<https://blackseablueeconomy.eu>



The **Black Sea CONNECT** initiative supports the implementation of the Black Sea Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA). The project will support the development of the first draft of SRIA Implementation Plan, with joint transnational activities such as operational network of funders, and knowledge transfer. National consultations of the Black Sea SRIA have already been conducted, while an overview of Black Sea projects has been updated.  
<http://connect2blacksea.org>

The **Drivers of Pontocaspian Rise and Demise (PRIDE)** project investigated the evolution and demise of lakes systems and biota in the Black Sea, Caspian Sea and surroundings. The **PRIDE** team created an information platform on the Pontocaspian biota and an information system on climate and environmental data and human impact in the Caspian Sea-Black Sea region. This allowed to identify which groups would be most affected by current perturbations, the ones sensitive to change, and the ones are more resilient and why. The programme combines climate-, geo- and bio- sciences and the PRIDE network contains 21 participating institutes.  
<https://pontocaspian.eu>



Tourism in the Black Sea region has been steadily growing but still faces challenges affecting the sustainability of the sector in the longer-term, notably in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The general objective of this project is to foster **Tourism 4.0** technologies and to boost coastal and maritime tourism in the Black Sea.  
<https://www.t4bs.eu>

## Environmental Resilience

**EMBLAS-Plus** is an environmental monitoring project conducted together with the United Nations Development Programme involving Georgia, the Russian Federation and Ukraine and tackles deficiencies and limitations in the availability of accurate, reliable, and comparable marine data. Novel techniques assess the state of Black Sea biodiversity and screen for the presence of more than 65,000 chemical substances. The project brought together the largest EU research vessel, leading laboratories across the EU, the European Commission's Joint Research Centre and the European Environment Agency. The joint work resulted in better knowledge of the Black Sea pollution status, presented in scientific reports and a web-based Black Sea Water Quality Database. Several wide-reaching awareness and beach litter clean up campaigns were carried out.

<http://emblasproject.org>



Raising safety, security and protection of marine environments standards for Black and Caspian Seas is addressed through a project managed by the **European Maritime Safety Agency**. It provides regional technical assistance, strengthens capacity building, being a platform for exchange of best practices and awareness rising [www.emsa.europa.eu](http://www.emsa.europa.eu)

**CeNoBS** supports the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive implementation in the Black Sea through establishing a regional monitoring system of cetaceans and noise monitoring for achieving "Good Environmental Status" (GES).

<https://www.cenobs.eu>



## Cross-border cooperation and the connection with the Danube

The **EU Black Sea Basin Cross-Border Cooperation Programme** has a particular importance for the development of communities throughout the Black Sea region. It provides significant support for building local economies. For the 2014-2020 period, €54 million was made available by this programme and more than 56 key projects were selected for funding in areas such as business development, environmental protection, action against climate change, and encouraging contacts between people. The projects aim to promote tourism opportunities by improving tourism infrastructure through modern means of presentation and through the restoration, reconstruction and modernisation of sites of cultural and historical importance. Trade links, transnational networks and knowledge transfers between entrepreneurs and professionals in the agricultural and related sectors are facilitated. Improved joint monitoring and environmental quality are pursued, for example through awareness and education actions on marine and riparian pollution issues and cross-border clean-up campaigns of rivers in the Black Sea basin.

<https://blacksea-cbc.net>



The **Waste Free Rivers for a Clean Black Sea** project introduced modern practices of the Green Waste & Composting and 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) for solid waste in the communities located along the Black Sea basin rivers in Romania, Georgia and Republic of Moldova.

<https://wmp.ge/wmp2/>

**MARLITER** provides improved online public access to environmental monitoring data and data tools for the Black Sea Basin supporting cooperation in the reduction of marine litter. It is an interactive web portal to support geospatial data on the Black Sea region, including digital maps on marine environmental conditions, geophysical maps for the coastal areas, environmental and abiotic parameters for the broader region, maps of protected areas, current climate and projections of future climate.

<https://marliter.bsnn.org>



The International Centre for Advanced Studies on River-Delta-Sea Systems, **DANUBIUS-RI**, is a pan-European distributed research infrastructure supporting interdisciplinary research on large river-sea systems. The project provides science-based innovative solutions for major environmental-related problems and sets the framework for the sustainable development of the Danube – Danube Delta – Black Sea system, as best practice for large river – delta – sea systems worldwide. Research hubs and high tech laboratories are created and connected to existing research infrastructure. New research vessels replace existing fleet for studying the river, delta and sea.

<http://www.danubius-ri.eu>



International Centre  
for Advanced Studies  
on River-Sea Systems

**DANUBE parksCONNECTED** bridges the Danube Protected Areas. It has initiated the Danube Habitat Corridor campaign to counteract fragmentation. The Danube River is a green lifeline for biodiversity. While the Network of Danube Protected Areas preserves the most valuable sites, habitat fragmentation limits efforts to preserve a cohesive ecosystem. The project offers Danube-wide strategies and exemplary activities aiming to restore and maintain connectivity in all habitat elements. As an example, the Danube Free Sky programme ensures collision-free bird migration along the Danube flyway in cooperation with power line operators. The cross-sector Danube Wild Island Corridor programme protects the islands, which are flagship habitats for intact river dynamics and home to characteristic species.

<http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/danubeparksconnected>

