



**Bucharest Declaration**  
*Adopted on 3<sup>rd</sup> October in Bucharest*

Representatives from the Assembly of European Regions (AER), gathered in Bucharest on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2014, at the kind invitation of the National Union of Romanian Counties and its President, Mr Marian Oprisan, President of Vrancea, unanimously adopted the following statement:

**We, representatives from Black Sea Regions and other European Regions,**

- 1- Highlight the importance of a sound and fruitful interregional cooperation in the Black Sea Basin, as a key element for peace and stability in the area and Europe as a whole.
- 2- Consider as urgent that a true Black Sea Strategy be put in place by the European Union, which would offer the ground for an integrated approach of the area. A real synergy among the European policies must be ensured, in particular with regard to the Eastern Partnership and Danube cooperation programme, but also beyond, to keep contacts with the Russian Federation.
- 3- Welcome therefore the involvement of the European Union to promote such a cooperation, in particular through the ENI CBC<sup>1</sup> Black Sea Basin (BSB) Programme.
- 4- Welcome also the signature of Association Agreements between the EU, Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova, in July, as this will serve the ENI CBC overall aim to “promote cooperation across the borders between EU Member States and the countries on the European Neighbourhood and Russian Federation”.
- 5- Express our concern, however, that the situation in Ukraine, despite the Association agreement, might have a negative impact on the participation of Ukrainian regions in the Black Sea Basin Programme.
- 6- Call upon, in that context, to the Russian Federation to sign the Financing Agreement once the programme has been approved, as its participation could help to promote contacts with Ukraine, but also other countries from the Black Sea Basin, and contribute to more stability in the area.

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<sup>1</sup> European Neighbourhood Instrument Cross-Border-Cooperation

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- 7- Think that the strategy for the BSB programme, as adopted by the participating countries in July, represents a step in the right direction. The thematic objectives proposed in this strategy for the new programme 2014-2020, focused on the support to business and entrepreneurship on the one hand, and coordination of environmental protection on the other hand, are indeed main issues to work upon, to promote the sustainable development of the Black Sea area.
- 8- Are concerned however that the areas for cooperation identified under each objective, whilst defined on the basis of an open consulting process and SWOT analysis, be too much restrictive and maybe too specific to encourage true cooperation.
- 9- Regret moreover the choice to leave aside a third thematic objective dedicated to “soft issues” which are relevant for the stability and mutual understanding in the area.
- 10-Underline indeed that support to cooperation and “people-to-people actions” in fields such as education<sup>2</sup>, social inclusion<sup>3</sup>, health<sup>4</sup> or youth - which are currently considered as horizontal issues only - would bring a strong contribution to the objectives of the programme.
- 11-Express our satisfaction that the support to local and regional good governance, whilst not being considered as an objective in itself in the new programme, be included among the horizontal issues. We indeed consider that projects cannot be run properly, and funding used efficiently, unless local and in particular regional partners are duly prepared and trained
- 12-Highlight in that respect the strong commitment of AER, which, through its Academic and Training Centre, offers a perfect platform for long-lasting partnerships among regional administrations, or the scientific community, as well as tailor-made capacity building services via its Training Academies.
- 13-Strongly support the idea of establishing a Black Sea Youth Centre, a physical space where young people could meet and foster new multicultural understanding between each other.
- 14-Call upon the Joint Programming Committee of the BSB Programme, the national representatives, Ambassadors, Members of the European Parliament, of the Committee of the Regions and of the Congress of the Council of Europe present at the Summit, to disseminate this Declaration, support its content and include AER as a partner in the finalisation of the BSB programme, as well as in the setting up and implementation of a true EU Black Sea Strategy.
- 15-Congratulate AER for its involvement in the Black Sea area and welcome its proposal to hold a 6<sup>th</sup> Summit in October 2015 in Greece, to assess the progress made until then under the new ENI CBC Black Sea Basin Programme and the implementation of a European Union Black Sea Strategy.

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<sup>2</sup> promotion of skills development and lifelong learning, support to research and innovation, fostering cooperation between businesses and training institutions

<sup>3</sup> support to the development and access to social services; support to the integration of immigrants and vulnerable group

<sup>4</sup> support to the development of and access to health