Public hearings in Georgia & presentation of Guria at Black Sea Stakeholder Conference

Two stakeholder meetings were held in Georgia in synergy with and in preparation of the major forum ‘Smart & Blue – Second Black Sea stakeholder conference - new opportunities for the blue economy of the Black Sea’, held in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 24 March 2015.

Objective of the public hearings in Tbilisi and Poti were to discuss with various central, regional and local authorities and key stakeholders the findings of the national assessment on present socio-economic status (SES), transport, energy, biodiversity & natural resources capacity within the Black Sea basin as well as to introduce stakeholders with the concepts of Integrated Maritime Policies and Blue Growth, promoted by the EU for the Black Sea.

Hearings in Tbilisi and Poti were facilitated by the JRC from Georgia, with major input of the European expert in integrated maritime policies. The meetings were organised and supported logistically by Civitas Georgica.

The stakeholder Public Hearing in Tbilisi was held on 24 February 2015 at the premises of Civitas Georgica and was attended by 18 representatives of the Ministries of Economy and Sustainable Development (maritime transport, spatial planning, tourism), Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources Protection (Biodiversity Department, the Black Sea Commission Representative from Georgia), its National Environmental Agency, State Chancellery (Office of Euro-Atlantic Integration); NGOs (national, international); business sector (tourism). In addition to main thematic presentations, participants were shared information about ILMM-BSE and the printed outputs of the joint research activities.

The stakeholder Public Hearing in Poti was held on 25 February 2015 at the Visitor Centre of the Kolkheti National park and was attended by 15 local representatives of the Ministries of Economy and Sustainable Development (Maritime Transport Administration, State Hydrography Service, State Maritime Academy, Adjara AR Tourism Department), Internal Affairs (Coast Guard, Joint Maritime Operations Centre at Supsa in Guria), Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection (Black Sea Convention Inspection, Poti Branch), Agency of Protected Areas (Kolkheti National Park), Batumi State University; ports and terminals (Batumi International Container Terminal, BP’s Supsa Terminal in Guria, Kulevi Oil Terminal), NGOs (local).
These consultations with stakeholders *inter alia* will contribute into the preparation of the major ILMM-BSE assessment deliverables on current SES characteristics, transport, energy, biodiversity and natural resources capacity within the Black Sea basin.

One outcome of the hearings was the participation of the Governor of Guria as the leading member of the Georgian delegation into ‘Smart & Blue - Second Black Sea stakeholder conference - new opportunities for the blue economy of the Black Sea’, held in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 24 March 2015. This was made possible at the invitation extended by the European Commission (DG MARE) & local facilitation leveraged by JRC & Civitas Georgica.

Detailed information about this major annual regional event can be found at the EC web-link http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/events/2015/03/events_20150324_01_en.htm.

The delivered speech, presentation and video-casting of the conference address by the Acting Governor of Guria Mrs. Ketevan Moistrapeshvili can be found at the following links:


http://webcast.ec.europa.eu/eutv/portal/mare/player/index_player.html?id=24456&pld=24449

Among other priorities the Governor of Guria highlighted in her address the importance of the Cross-Border Cooperation Program for the Black Sea and enhanced role of European peripheral maritime regions in delivering sustainable coastal governance.

Key speakers at a major European event, devoted to dialogue and stakeholder involvement for a coherent and coordinated approaches in the Black Sea area included Mr. Karmenu Vella, Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries and Mr. Moskovski, Minister for Transport, Information Technology and Communications of Bulgaria.

JRC and President of Civitas Georgica were invited by EC to participate in the conference.

**Project web site:** [http://www.e-blacksea.com](http://www.e-blacksea.com)

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