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of the Republic of Bulgaria



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# REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE BLACK SEA AND DANUBE REGIONS: Addressing Challenges and Providing Perspectives

16-17 November 2007, Boyana Residence, Sofia, Bulgaria

organized in partnership with  
the Institute for Regional and International Studies (IRIS) – Sofia  
the Bulgarian Diplomatic Institute and the  
Bulgarian European Community Studies Association (BECSA)

## CONFERENCE REPORT

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## CONTENTS

	Page
TEXT OF THE CONFERENCE REPORT	3
CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS	26
PROGRAMME OF THE CONFERENCE	30
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	32

## TEXT OF THE CONFERENCE REPORT

### Introduction

The International Conference “**Regional Cooperation in the Black Sea and Danube Regions: Addressing Challenges and Providing Perspectives**” took place on 16-17 November 2007 at Boyana Residence in Sofia, Bulgaria. The event was organized by the National Assembly and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria in cooperation with the South-Eastern Europe Association (Suedosteuropa-Gesellschaft) based in Munich, Germany, and in partnership with the Institute for Regional and International Studies (IRIS) – Sofia, the Bulgarian Diplomatic Institute and the Bulgarian European Community Studies Association (BECSA). The event was attended by participants from 33 countries and representatives of seven international and regional organizations and institutions, including the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation (BSEC). The forum was a follow-up to the international conference “The European Union (EU) and Black Sea Regional Cooperation”, which was organized by the South-Eastern Europe Association on 7-8 May 2007 in Berlin during the German EU Council Presidency with the aim to formulate and enhance an EU policy focused on the Black Sea region. The Sofia event was prepared by two workshops (October 2007) gathering policy makers, researchers, government and parliamentary experts and NGO representatives. They produced four discussion papers that served as background guidance for the debate within the four panels of the international conference:

- The new EU maritime policy – main challenges for the region;
- Environmental challenges in the Danube-Black Sea region;
- The Danube and the Black Sea – connecting regions and neighbours through transport and infrastructure links;
- Synergies between actors, initiatives and processes.

This document summarizes the speeches that were delivered and the discussions that took place during the two days of the conference.

## Inaugural Session

### Welcome and Introduction

The conference was opened by **Mr. GEORGI PIRINSKI, Chairman of the National Assembly of Bulgaria**, who welcomed all participants and emphasized the importance of this highly representative forum as a result of the combined efforts of the Parliament and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria together with the German South East Europe Association. Mr. Pirinski stressed the forum's task to build upon the results of the Berlin conference on 7-8 May 2007 on the EU and Black Sea regional cooperation, and also to expand the scope of analysis by covering also the Danube water-way. In this context the speaker recommended that this forum benefits from the conference "The Danube Region: A Vital Artery in Europe" held in Ulm, Germany, on 6-8 November 2007.

Mr. Pirinski recalled the threefold aim of the Berlin conference: (1) How could the EU strengthen its policy towards the Black Sea region? (2) Which lessons learned from other regional cooperation formats can be applied in this case? (3) How to identify thematic areas and concrete projects that are feasible in the short term? On the first objective – policy enhancement – the speaker based his argument on the vital importance of the Black Sea region for the long-term interests of the EU and the overall national security of all member states. He recognized that the three distinct EU policies in the area (the European Neighbourhood Policy, the pre-accession process and the EU-Russia strategic partnership) reflect the realities on the ground, yet he expressed the need for defining the principle of partnership as a single unifying basic principle for the implementation of these policies. Partnership should balance (or counter-balance against) trends towards unilateral approaches, which might be prompted by the strategic interests of the parties involved.

On the second objective – lessons learned from other regions – Mr. Pirinski highlighted the relevant cooperation experience in South Eastern Europe and reminded the main Berlin conclusions to the audience: (1) Regional ownership is required to develop regional cooperation. New forms should be considered with due attention and preference should be given to existing platforms and organizations. (2) Key priorities should be defined in line with existing local interests and political will. (3) Structural tensions existing in intra-regional cooperation, as well as with the EU, should be addressed constructively from a strategic viewpoint. (4) Involving civil society should be a primary concern from the outset rather than an afterthought. To exemplify the practical importance of these conclusions, Mr. Pirinski drew his listeners' attention to the Stability Pact and the process of transferring its activities on to the new Regional Cooperation Council and to the South East European Cooperation Process.<sup>1</sup> The speaker underlined that the BSEC Parliamentary Assembly (PABSEC) provides valuable potential for beneficial partnership with the European Parliament.

On the aim to define thematic areas and concrete projects for cooperation, Mr. Pirinski pointed at the Commission's communication on "Black Sea Synergy" and at numerous research papers to conclude about the overriding importance of projects in the energy sphere. These should bring together producers, intermediaries and consumers in a balanced partnership arrangement. Of similar importance are also environmental projects, projects in the areas of health care and social policy, as well as democracy and institution building, and

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<sup>1</sup> The National Assembly of Bulgaria hosts the secretariat serving the parliamentary dimension of this cooperation format.

the combat against different forms of crime. The future challenge lies in moving on to projects implementation. This could be helped by previous experience (e.g. that of the Northern Dimension in the environment and in the health policy areas) with a view to integrating a broad range of financial sources.

### **Keynote Speeches**

**Mr. GERNOT ERLER, Minister of State at the German Federal Foreign Office and President of South-Eastern Europe Association**, greeted conference participants on behalf of the German Government and the Federal Foreign Office and on behalf of the South-Eastern Europe Association. At the start of his intervention, he made a reference to the established perception about the Black Sea as a geographical and cultural frontier and as a problematic area associated today with “frozen conflicts”, trafficking in drugs, weapons or human beings and illegal migration to Western Europe. In his view, although the EU has developed policies with all six littoral countries, there is still a long way to go before “Brussels” dares speak about “Mare Nostrum” in the case of the Black Sea. The countries in the region should set the objective of creating a new sense of regional identity, which could replace the divides and antagonism that prevailed down the centuries. In Mr. Erler’s opinion, the EU has the right capabilities and experience for such a project. It has already built systems of regional cooperation, which have helped overcome conflicts in other areas (e.g. the Northern Dimension, the Barcelona Process or the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe). Much of this experience is reflected in the EU Commission Communication on Black Sea Synergy (April 2007) and in the German EU Presidency’s report (June 2007) on further developing the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

As regards cooperation along the Danube, Mr. Erler referred to the Third European Conference of Danube Cities and Regions that took place on 6-8 September 2007 in Vidin as an example of the efforts of Danubian cities (Budapest, Bratislava, Vienna, Ulm and Vidin) to build a denser network of cooperation. The minister stressed that Vidin and Calafat were a symbol of Europe’s initial failure to build a second bridge over the Danube on the 500 km-long stretch between Romania and Bulgaria. The Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe succeeded in reconciling the diverging interests on the two banks thus paving the way for a new bridge. Mr. Erler drew attention to the contribution of many international bodies in fostering cooperation along the Danube in different fields. In this context, he briefly mentioned the Danube Commission (responsible for shipping-related questions), the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (environment), the Danube Cooperation Process, the Working Community of the Danube Regions, the Southeast European Cooperation Process (SEECF), the Energy Community for South-Eastern Europe, and the Central European Free Trade Area (CEFTA). The German Minister also stressed that the future of the EU will lie in the regions. The stronger globalization becomes, the quicker the need for regional identities will grow. The Danube offers an ideal starting point for fostering a shared identity. Recent research has often shown that a regional sense of identity and its expression promote an awareness of regional responsibility, a readiness to engage in dialogue and preventive conflict resolution.

Mr. Erler indicated that one of the reasons for his participation in the conference was to share a vision with other parties concerned and to see how it can be translated into reality – the vision of a new EU member state, such as Bulgaria, taking on a leadership task. In conclusion, he asked the question: Why shouldn’t a country like Bulgaria – a country that has developed excellent relations with all its neighbours and, not least for that reason, enjoys recognition as

an anchor of stability in a still volatile Balkan region – raise a hand and say “We are prepared to take on a task in and for the EU: to harness the concepts of Black Sea synergy and Danube cooperation, to develop creative ideas on how to make the EU’s considerable experience in regional cooperation work in the Greater Black Sea / South-Eastern Europe / Danube Region, and to launch from here a process of network-building in all countries concerned so that such ideas can be put into practice!”

In his keynote speech, **Mr. IVAILO KALFIN**, **Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria**, stated that the topics related to the Black Sea, South-Eastern Europe, as well as to Danube cooperation, stand as leading priorities for Bulgaria’s foreign policy. He expressed his confidence that this conference’s discussions will generate new ideas for cooperation with partners in the region. In his view, Bulgaria’s and Rumania’s accession to the EU marks a new phase in the development of relations in the region in political and legal terms. It involves a stronger need for cooperation of the EU with the Black Sea states and with the countries in Central Asia, going beyond the Black Sea littoral countries. According to Bulgaria’s understanding, established Danube cooperation should serve as a main vector and a key example for the EU’s partnership with neighbour countries. Bulgaria supports enhanced regional cooperation, which is based on several fundamental principles: (1) Regional cooperation requires concerted efforts for the development and prosperity of the area. (2) It should be inclusive, embracing all countries in all forms of cooperation. (3) Synergy should be sought in the case of various regional initiatives and programmes in order to achieve complementarity among them. (4) Each country should have the possibility to decide at its own discretion against or in favour of joining certain initiative. (5) Regional initiatives should be co-financed by the partners in the region, also with the mobilization of international funds. In this respect the Northern dimension could be an example to follow. (6) Regional cooperation should be open, on one hand, and integrated in the policies of the EU, on the other.

Mr. Kalfin pointed to the dynamic development of the region in recent decades. The countries have adopted new standards of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The annual average GDP growth of 5% places the Black Sea region in the third position after East Asia and South Asia in terms of growth rates. On the other hand, EU energy routes through the Black Sea region are going to provide 50% of supplies for consumers in Europe. At least 2/3 of Bulgaria’s external trade passes through the ports along the Danube or the Black Sea coast. Within the EU, the coastal territories account for 40% of the GDP of the Union and its population. The new Integrated Maritime Policy of the EU involves interaction with neighbouring regions in order to meet the common challenges of marine environment’s protection and energy security.

The establishment of the maritime monitoring network in order to meet the threats of navigation, marine pollution and general marine security will definitely need cooperation on a regional basis and close linkage between the EU and neighbouring regions. The Coordination and Information Centre in Bourgas already plays an important role in the synchronization of activities of the border services of Black Sea EU member states and other littoral countries. The Blue Book on the EU’s Maritime Policy (presented on 10 October 2007) and the Action Plan include a number of initiatives in relation to marine survey, marine transport without borders, national integrated maritime policies of the EU member states and an integrated approach for marine management. The maritime policy priorities of the EU can be implemented in this region as a very good foundation for cooperation and for addressing issues and solving problems to the benefit of all countries involved. Another aspect is related to the establishment of a multilateral legal framework with regulatory measures for fishing

and sustainable management of fish stock through an integrated approach based on the protection of marine environment and the prosperity of marine communities.

The minister stressed the fields of Black Sea cooperation that would be very attractive for many, not only for the countries along the coast: transport, economy, security and human dialogue. Achieving a certain level of institutional arrangement is the response to environmental challenges: in view of the trans-border nature of problems, it would make more sense to seek harmonization between the DABLAS management approach and the sector approach of the Strategic Plan, in order to make the latter more focused and pragmatic.

Mr. Kalfin emphasised also the significance of the maritime aspect of the EU's energy policy. Water zones are important not only for the transmission of energy resources but also for the development of alternative sources of energy in view of promoting renewables. These spaces are also substantial for the establishment of linkages within the internal energy market. The building of alternative routes for the transportation of energy resources from Central Asia to the European market is a strategic undertaking that requires time and considerable investment. Energy is an important component of the framework of interaction with countries interested in cooperating with the EU (including countries along the Black Sea coast, in the Caucasus and in Central Asia). Promotion of democracy, human rights and good governance can be further stimulated by involvement of the civil society and development of exchange programs.

In Mr. Kalfin's opinion, there are many instruments for accelerating Black Sea cooperation in the future. Many of them can be borrowed from other models (the Northern Dimension) or from good practices and achievements in the area of Danube cooperation. The potential of regional and local authorities can be seen in the European Conference of Danube Cities and Regions and is proven in the fields of tourism, environmental protection, transport, research, communications, as well as in the elaboration of major projects such as the Danube academy. This example for cooperation involving the civil society, local authorities and NGOs is indeed a model that can be emulated also in the Black Sea region. In the field of energy, the Baku Initiative is a good example for preparing a road map with the perspective to develop a regulatory framework for the management of energy community market for the EU, the Black Sea region and the Caspian region. The exchange of knowledge and information about the region is of great importance because it will help people to work together. According to the Bulgarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, the information system of the Northern Dimension is yet another wonderful model to emulate, and the establishment of a Black Sea Synergy information system is an important idea to be discussed.

## **Panel I. The New EU Maritime Policy – Main Challenges for the Region**

**Dr. DIMITRIS TRIANTAPHYLLOU**, Executive Director of the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) – Athens, (moderator of the panel) gave an insight into the fundamental aspects of the new EU maritime policy as part of the Commission's strategic objectives for 2005-2009 based on the Green Paper (June 2006) and the recent Blue Paper (10 October 2007). He stressed several factors making the initiation of this policy relevant – the length of the EU member states' coastline, the share of maritime trade in the Union's external trade, the share of population living in coastal areas and of GDP produced there. He reminded the major goals of the new maritime policy: (a) maximizing sustainable use of oceans and seas; (b) building an innovation base for maritime policy; (c) delivering the highest quality of life in coastal regions; (d) promoting EU leadership in international maritime affairs; (e) raising the visibility of maritime Europe. Dr. Triantaphyllou raised many questions to be discussed with regard to the impact of the EU maritime policy on the Black Sea region and on the existing structures of cooperation, such as BSEC.

The first panelist, **Ms. KRASSIMIRA MARTINOVA**, Deputy Minister of Transport of Bulgaria, shared the view that EU membership really demands from Bulgaria to make a substantive contribution in the implementation of EU policy in the Black Sea region. Particular interest in this policy is based on both the country's and the region's crossroads location.

Ms. Martinova highlighted two key elements of the new EU maritime policy – integration, understood as linking sectors and bringing different actors and stakeholders together, and the holistic approach. She drew attention to the concept of synergy between economic growth and environmental sustainability and pointed to the effect of shipping on climate change (in particular, searching for innovative and effective measures for reducing emissions from ships). The main challenges are connected with the necessity to keep a high level of competitiveness in the integrated maritime sector, to create optimal conditions for investments and economic development, to create a friendly political climate for the prevention of conflicts in the region, as well as to secure leading role for the EU in the maritime sphere.

Ms. Martinova emphasised that the Black Sea is an isolated sea to a certain degree and it is one of the most polluted in the world. In this respect it is especially important to maintain the balance between the protection of Black Sea and its use for economic goals. Tourism and transport can be the tools to develop and promote innovative technologies for building up environmentally friendly infrastructure.

In the view of this speaker, Bulgaria can contribute in the following areas: enhancing maritime safety in the Black Sea and environmental and coastal protection; safety and security policy in Black Sea ports; development of the transport system between the countries of the region and Europe; enhancing cooperation with the countries in the TRACECA framework; development of Highways of the Sea; coordinate development of Black Sea Ring Highway; environmental management of Black Sea ports, etc. Ms. Martinova indicated the importance of TRASECA and the ferry lines between Bulgaria-Russia-Georgia and Bulgaria-Ukraine-Georgia. In conclusion, she noted Bulgaria's potential contribution for the development of a sustainable transport system in the Balkans that will connect the transport infrastructure of the Black Sea region with the European and Asian networks.

**Mr. MIRCEA CIOPRAGA**, Member of the Romanian Chamber of Deputies, Vice Chairman of the Committee for Industries and Services, Head of the Romanian Delegation to PABSEC, gave an insight into the activities of PABSEC as a forum of dialog and cooperation for 12 member states from the Black Sea region. He also outlined the importance of the EU maritime policy for the region and shared his conviction that the problems affecting the Black Sea are common to all countries in the area, which entails a common responsibility to solve them. The limited resources in the region add to the need for a strategic approach in a medium-term and long-term perspective. One of the preconditions for the success of this long-term approach is regional ownership.

While reflecting on the Communication on an integrated EU maritime policy, Mr. Ciopraga underlined that, at this stage, maritime policy mainly addresses topics on the EU's territory. However, since issues such as pollution, the sustainable use of marine resources, employment creation for the coastal regions, maritime safety and security are highly relevant for all countries in the region, these concerns should be integrated in already existing relations of the EU with its neighbours. It is also important to generate ideas on how to coordinate the approaches for the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, as well as to see how the maritime policy of the EU and the Black Sea Synergy can be mutually reinforcing. He made a special reference to the report and recommendation 94 of PABSEC on the state and prospects of fishing in BSEC member states, which stressed the significance of EU maritime policy and called on BSEC parliaments and governments to intensify cooperation with the EU taking into consideration the Green paper on maritime policy.

Mr. Ciopraga pointed at three favourable prerequisites for further progress on maritime policy in the Black Sea area. First, that would be the allocation by the European Commission of 17 million euro for the period 2007-2013 under the cooperation programme for the Black Sea basin, for the littoral areas of Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine and the entire territories of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova. Second, that would be the signature (in 2007, in Belgrade) of a Memorandum of Understanding between Albania, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Rumania, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine on the development of the Highways of the Sea in the BSEC region. Third, he drew the audience's attention to Rumania's involvement in another project – the Black Sea Euroregion, which is an initiative of the Council of Europe.

The presentation of **Ms. MARUSYA LYUBCHEVA**, Member of the European Parliament (Socialist Group / Bourgas – Bulgaria), was focused primarily on the environmental emergencies, which require concrete action and special prevention mechanisms within maritime policy. In this context, a very important problem with lots of political repercussions is the negative attitude of the population in coastal regions, as well as the need for fostering solidarity in resolving such problems. The Black Sea and all water basins related to the EU bring positives not only for the individuals but also for the states, because the seas represent gates to other countries which share the same problems.

Ms. Lyubcheva outlined the relevance of the Black Sea dimension of the EU's maritime policy for Bulgaria mostly in creating opportunities for the development of sea trade, the shipbuilding industry, fishing and coastal tourism. The policy has to contribute to local business and civil initiatives. It should correspond to development of a flourishing maritime economy in environmentally friendly way. This policy has to be supported by significant achievements in research, technologies and innovations in order to establish the scientific and innovative foundation for decision making.

The speaker posed several questions for discussion: How should we use innovative technologies for adaptation to the climate change? How should we handle the expanding

industries with respect to the blue biotechnology? What are the approaches to preserve biodiversity? What mechanisms should be developed for better exploitation of marine resources? How should we use EU financial instruments and the maritime policy in order to synchronize it with the policy for the hinterland? Furthermore, Ms. Lyubcheva suggested that answers to these questions should be sought on the basis of two main “pillars”. The first pillar is the Lisbon strategy and its maritime aspects – increasing employment within the maritime sector, promotion of maritime professions, investment in research and education, etc. The second pillar is the sea itself, regarded as a resource. In conclusion, the speaker called on the EU and all coastal countries to develop the European maritime heritage and to reinstitute the maritime identity.

The panelist from the European Commission **Mr. FRANÇOIS BEGEOT**, **Policy Officer at Directorate-General Transport and Energy**, underlined the importance of the economic aspect of maritime activities. Around 90% of the external trade and over 40% of the internal trade of the EU is transported by sea. These numbers correspond to 3.5 billion tons of goods and over 350 million passengers per year. In this connection it is obvious that the EU needs a better transportation system. However, the maritime policy goes beyond the simple transport system.

The speaker gave an insight into the Commission’s proposal for launching of all-embracing policy, which will take full account of the need and interest of each of its components. This integrated approach will involve all different Directorates-General of the Commission in order to formulate a new maritime policy, which will be based on respect for the subsidiarity principle. It will analyze interactions between various sectors and policies and take them into account at every level, so as to develop common tools for attaining real synergy and avoiding conflicts. The Communication and its Action Plan list a range of concrete actions to be launched: a European maritime transport space without barriers; a European strategy for marine research; national integrated maritime policies to be developed by member states; an European network for maritime surveillance; a roadmap towards maritime spatial planning by member states; a strategy to mitigate the effects of climate change on coastal regions; reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and pollution by shipping; elimination of pirate fishing and destructive high seas bottom trawling; a European network of maritime clusters; a review of EU labour law exemptions for the shipping and fishing sectors.

Mr. Begeot shared the view that an integrated governance framework for maritime affairs requires horizontal planning tools that cut across sea-related sectoral policies and support joined up policy making. The following three are of major importance: maritime surveillance, which is critical for the safe and secure use of marine space; maritime spatial planning, which is a key planning tool for sustainable decision-making; and a comprehensive and accessible source of data and information.

The speaker paid particular attention to the need for a right balance between economic growth and respect for the environment. He indicated that the intensifying of urbanization and the overbuilding of the coast in the case of Bulgaria are putting the environment under immense pressure.

In conclusion, Mr. Begeot underlined that by launching the EU maritime policy the European Commission has laid the ground for a more integrated and sustainable development of all marine and maritime activities. The EU maritime policy will play a key role also in the Black Sea region. Bulgaria and Rumania, as EU member states, will be in the front line to promote this policy.

In his contribution, **Mr. GEORGIOS BARKATSAS**, **Commander of the Hellenic Coast Guard, Directorate for Shipping Policy and Development at the Ministry of Mercantile**

**Marine-Aegean and Island Policy, Athens**, pointed to the strategic importance of maritime policy, which can serve as a response to the challenges posed to this sector by globalization and become a solid platform on which to further regional cooperation. The speaker noted that shipping is one of the most dynamic sectors of Greece's economy. As an archipelagic state with 16 000 km coastline, Greece has a strong interest in an integrated approach for all issues concerning maritime policy. The relevant Commission initiative will be the vehicle leading to the achievement of sensitive political, economic and social balances under a common denominator. The development of the EU maritime economy should progress in parallel with sustainable development of the marine environment and the coastal areas. It is for the benefit of Europe to support its shipping industry for economic and geopolitical reasons. There is also a vital need for Europe to retain its leading position in this international and extremely competitive industry.

According to Mr. Barkatsas, placing long-term objectives for European shipping should be based on strong foundations that will ensure preserving its competitiveness, responding to environmental challenges and fulfilling social objectives. The primary objective of the national maritime policy is to provide quality conditions for shipping operations with respect to the human factor and the marine environment.

Member states' positions regarding the EU maritime policy must be taken into serious consideration. The promotion of unilateral priorities and measures, which do not take notice of possible economic repercussions and as a consequence are in contrast with vital member states interests, should be avoided. Greece strongly supports that this view should be taken seriously into account in the maritime strategy of the next decade (2008-2018), which will be presented by the Commission after comprehensive consultations with member states. In addition, it would be wise to take into account the views of local communities, social and business partners. The welfare of European societies is highly dependent on shipping. Support for the EU maritime industry, which faces fierce international competition, arises as a necessity. Greece supports all proposals on an enhanced cooperation of national coast guards and the interconnectivity of maritime surveillance systems. Furthermore, it supports political initiatives which aim at promoting the quality of life in coastal areas, the provision of more detailed data for marine environment protection, tourism development, etc.

In the view of this speaker, the Commission's Action Plan should pursue the development of policies that contribute to the competitiveness of maritime transport in Europe and the further liberalization of international markets. Moreover, the Action Plan should describe the main principles of better regulation, which will take notice of the global character of shipping and the role of the international organizations, will promote the better enforcement of regulations and policies agreed unanimously by member states and will respect the subsidiarity principle.

The challenge of good maritime governance derives from the multiplicity of actors involved. The creation of the Commission's maritime policy task force, cooperation among Directorates-General, demonstrations of possible synergies – these are all examples of good governance. Further action along these lines is important for avoiding conflicting policies or unilateral legislative approaches.

In conclusion, Mr. Barkatsas underlined that since 10 October 2007 Europe faces a unique opportunity and a significant challenge. For strategic reasons the EU needs to maintain a strong shipping industry and the respective employment opportunities in order to retain its leading position in the world maritime transportation system. On the other hand, it is an imperative need for the EU to continue its efforts for the preservation of marine environment and its resources. Within the context of the common efforts it is required to give priority to decisions based on long-term political planning and detailed economic assessment.

## **Discussion**

The panel's moderator outlined several topical issues for discussion: (1) How should all those cooperation mechanisms and structures be coordinated? Is it necessary to create a new ad hoc group or a new working group to deal with this issue? (2) What role should BSEC play? (3) Since 1 January 2007 the Black Sea region is an EU space. How would this affect the relations with Russia?

**Mr. ISTVAN VALKAR**, General Director, Secretariat of the Danube Commission, Budapest, asked a question about the project for the development of Motorways of the Sea. He wanted detailed information because of the importance of this project also in relation to the Danube region.

**Mr. FRANÇOIS BEGEOT** explained that the Motorways of the Sea are a complex system, in which the private sector should be involved. This project should not be reduced to focus only on the ferry lines.

## **Panel II. Environmental Challenges in the Danube-Black Sea Region**

The first panelist, **Dr. PHILIP WELLER**, Executive Secretary at the Vienna-based Permanent Secretariat of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), focused his presentation on the state of cooperation in meeting environmental challenges in the Danube River basin and outlined some fundamental aspects of the activity of ICPDR. The legal framework for such activity is established by the Danube River Protection Convention signed on 29 June 1994 in Sofia. While implementing the convention, ICPDR has the following priorities: to strengthen international cooperation; to ensure sustainable water management; to ensure conservation, improvement and rational use of surface waters and ground waters; to reduce inputs of nutrients and hazardous substances; to control floods and ice hazards; to reduce pollution loads of the Black Sea. A number of international inter-governmental bodies, non-governmental organisations and business associations dealing with environment concerns are associated with the work of ICPDR as observers.

Dr. Weller stressed the importance of the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, for which ICPDR serves as a coordination platform. All efforts of the contracting parties are concentrated on the achievement of a coordinated river basin management plan for the Danube River, which has to be compiled by 2009-2010. The plan envisages 4 steps: document on significant water management issues; issue papers on different significant water management issues; stakeholder consultation process and joint programme of measures. The main goal of the plan is to reach good water and ecosystem quality for the Danube and its people. The Danube River Basin Analysis Report identified 4 key water management issues: organic pollution; nutrient pollution; pollution resulting from hazardous substances and hydromorphological alterations.

The speaker highlighted the importance of the Joint Statement on the development of inland navigation and environmental protection in the Danube River Basin, which was adopted by ICPDR, the Sava River Basin Commission and the Navigation Commission. He also gave an insight into the results of the Joint Danube Survey 2 (August-September 2007), the objectives of the Action Programme on sustainable flood protection and the solidarity aspects of the Danube Day celebrations. He emphasized the significant role of the cooperation of ICPDR with the Black Sea Commission (ICPBS) and the Memorandum of Understanding on common strategic goals.

**Dr. VIOLETA VELIKOVA** from the Permanent Secretariat of the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution, Istanbul, addressed the role of the Black Sea Commission as a regional focal point in environmental protection. The major objective of the Commission's activity is to protect the environment by enhancing cooperation in the Black Sea region through capacity building, the active involvement of national donors, governmental and non-governmental organizations, public and private sector, and through stimulating good political will. The key challenge for planning and decision making is to increase economic prosperity without endangering the ecological recovery of the Black Sea. The fundamental priorities in the work of the Commission are: combating eutrophication (reduction of nutrient loads); elimination of the input of hazardous substances (diffuse and point sources from land-based activities, vessels, dumping, pollution from activities on the continental shelf, from or through the atmosphere); improving the safety of navigation and response capabilities in emergency situations; halting the decline of biodiversity, protecting

habitats, overcoming the common dilemma of overuse and mismanagement (protection and conservation of the marine living resources and marine ecosystem); sustainable human and environment development.

Dr. Velikova stressed that the main idea of sustainability is to identify not only where is the potential conflict between human action and nature, but also which human activities could co-exist in harmony with nature. She outlined the two different approaches within the framework of EU maritime policy: sectoral actions (ecosystem approach to fishery; reduced air pollution; action on climate change) and cross-sectoral actions (observation system development and Data Network; spatial planning for the growth of sea transport, aquaculture development, use of renewable energy (waves and winds), protection of habitats, etc.). Regarding interaction within the broader Danube-Black Sea region, Ms. Velikova emphasized that 84% of river borne inorganic nitrogen load and 49% of phosphorus in the Black Sea stem from the Danube.

The presentation of **Mr. CLAUDE ROUAM**, **Head of Enlargement and Neighbouring Countries Unit in Directorate-General Environment of the European Commission**, was dedicated to the fundamental aspects of the EU environment policy with respect to the Danube and the Black Sea region. He noted that the isolated nature of the Black Sea makes it vulnerable to pollution and the Danube is the biggest tributary bringing pollution from far away in Europe. The main environmental problems of the Black Sea are oil pollution, over-fishing, eutrophication and the alien invasive species. The environmental impact of human activity is reflected in: excessive nutrient loads (particularly nitrogen and phosphorous); overexploitation of surface water and groundwater resources; contamination with hazardous substances (including heavy metals, oil, oxygen depleting substances and microbiological toxins); accidental pollution; degradation and loss of wetlands. However, the speaker noted that there is a sign of improvement – some positive changes in water quality were observed in the 2001 ICPDR report compared to previous assessment. Municipalities and industry released also fewer pollutants in 2002 than in previous years.

Mr. Rouam drew attention to the region's importance for the EU. The latest enlargement made the prosperity, stability and security of the Black Sea region and neighbouring countries of immediate concern for the EU. The major problem in relation to the broader Danube – Black Sea area is the existence of several different policies for the different countries in the region. That is why, the new initiative Black Sea Synergy aims to complement existing policies and approaches, to focus political attention at regional level and to invigorate existing processes.

The speaker outlined the objectives and activities of the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) as a “one-stop shop for civil protection assistance” and the attempts at linking the Danube and Black Sea zones in the case of the DABLAS task force, which aims to improve the implementation of the Danube and Black Sea Conventions and to improve the coordination between them.

In conclusion, the panelist identified the following challenges: (1) Regional cooperation remains difficult because the region isn't homogenous and there are many different partner countries. (2) There is a need to raise political and public awareness about environmental issues. (3) All activities should be focused on prevention. (4) Grant assistance from donors is limited. Because of that, it is necessary to use all available resources in the most effective way and to pursue actively ‘low-cost’ options – transfer of know-how and experience. Mr. Rouam finished his contribution with an open question about the shift from monitoring to action: How much knowledge is needed before we act?

The **Bulgarian Deputy Minister for Environment and Water Ms. LUBKA KATCHAKOVA** underlined that the Danube and the Black Sea are not just ordinary or

trivial water basins for this country; they are of special importance for Bulgarian citizens. She pointed at the challenges for the Bulgarian Ministry for Environment and Water in the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and recognized the crucial importance of cooperation between ICPDR and the Black Sea Commission.

Ms. Katchakova gave an account of the interesting debates of a conference on climate change, which took place in France. Climate change worldwide will affect also the countries of the Danube and Black Sea area. Therefore, cooperation between states in the region will become indispensable and of great value for mitigating the negative environmental effects of global warming.

The speaker pointed out that Bulgaria has completely harmonized its legislation with EU standards in environmental policy. There are 22 water treatment plants in the Black Sea area and the construction of new installations is a high priority for national policy. The development of coastal tourism corresponds to a higher level of urbanization, which makes a negative impact on the environment. Bulgaria is aware of the need to elaborate an integrated management approach for land and water resources.

Ms. Katchakova noted that the countries in the Danube and Black Sea region are at different levels of economic development and do not have identical political structures. Such distinctions have their negative impact on dialogue between states. Departing from such a low start-up level, a sign of improvement of the work of the Black Sea Commission can be noticed in the last year. Cooperation with ICPDR will become much closer. The Deputy Minister indicated that Bulgaria will continue to play an active role in furthering this cooperation.

**Dr. KONSTANTIN PETROV from the Institute of Electrochemistry and Energy Systems (IEES) of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS)**, who was both speaker and panel moderator, presented a scientific project of Hydrogen production from H<sub>2</sub>S in the Black Sea and industrial waters using “green energy”.<sup>2</sup>

The speaker stressed that the Black Sea is unique because 90% of sea water is anaerobic. H<sub>2</sub>S is produced by sulphur-reducing bacteria at an approximate rate of 10000 tons per day and it keeps reducing the life in the Black Sea. Oxygen–hydrogen sulphide interface is established at about 70-150 m below the surface.

The main idea of the project is to exploit the potential of Hydrogen sulphide (H<sub>2</sub>S) in Black Sea waters for the production of hydrogen, sulphides (sulphur) and sweet water using green energy sources, such as sun and wind. The originality of the project is based on the thermodynamical possibility to produce hydrogen from H<sub>2</sub>S with much less energy than from water (H<sub>2</sub>O). Additionally to Hydrogen, electrolysis of H<sub>2</sub>S produces polysulphides, which is another valuable commercial product. Project partners believe that a commercially feasible and ecologically compatible technology for the reduction of H<sub>2</sub>S in Black Sea waters and for the production of hydrogen, sulphides (sulphur) and sweet water using green energy sources like sun and wind can be developed. Using green energy for the production of sweet water, hydrogen and sulphides from H<sub>2</sub>S in Black Sea waters is expected to deliver great economic and environmental benefits to the people living in the area.

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<sup>2</sup> This is a joint project of IEES, the Institute of Oceanology of BAS in Varna, the Chemical Engineering Department of the Yildiz Technical University / Davutpasa Campus in Istanbul, the National Institute for Cryogenics and Isotopic Technologies in Rm. Valcea / Romania, the A.O. Kovalevsky Institute of Biology of the Southern Seas / Oceanology Centre at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in Sevastopol, and the International Association for Hydrogen Energy in Florida, USA.

## Discussion

**Prof. DAN MANOLELI**, Chairman of the Black Sea NGO Network based in Varna, asked why a map presented by Ms. Violeta Velikova showed that the clearest waters without heavy metals are adjacent to the coasts of Russia. **Ms. VELIKOVA** explained that this does not mean that there is no pollution; it means that there is no data. The availability of reliable and comparable data is a key task for the Black Sea Commission.

**Mr. OGNYAN CHAMPOEV**, Head of Analysis and Planning Department at the Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, asked two questions. The first was related to pollution in the Black Sea. Since the Danube gives only 45% of phosphorus load to Black Sea waters, this means that the other 51% are coming from other rivers. If this is so, then could the model of cooperation between ICPDR and the BSC be transmitted and transformed to other river basins, which are going into the Black sea? The second question was focused on the binding character of the document on Black Sea Fishery and the related statement on the European Commission. **Dr. VELIKOVA** responded that there is no final agreement about the level of loads, and that the BSC is in the process of reaching a common opinion about the nutrient loads. There are also other components of pollution to work with. This is not the case with the other rivers. There are two rivers from Ukraine, which are also significant sources of pollution. However, not only rivers bring pollution, but there is also input from the atmosphere, from industrial sources, the Bosphorus, etc. In response to the second question she noted that the story of the legally binding document is very long. It was drafted in 1994. For many years, there have been discussions about the nature of the document – should it be a convention or a protocol? After Bulgaria's accession to the EU, the document was sent to Brussels with a request for an opinion. The European Commission is expected to express it at a conference in Istanbul in January 2008. In any case, the document will need improvement because of the absence of agreement on the issue of quotas.

**Prof. EVGENI KOTOVOY** from the Russian Diplomatic Academy in Moscow asked about the extraction of Hydrogen. He referred to earlier research projects carried out in the 1990s in Russia and Ukraine, which made the conclusion about the very high degree of energy input that is necessary for extracting H<sub>2</sub>. So he asked Mr. Petrov whether his project's calculations confirmed that this would be an energy-saving technology. His second question was directed to Mr. Weller with regard to the measures taken by the ICPDR for reducing pollution in the Danube. **Dr. WELLER** explained that the Danube is the most significant pollution source to the Black Sea. There were significant investments from the Danube river countries to reduce pollution. The EU also supports such activities. The challenge is to preserve this situation in parallel to the improving economic circumstances of the region. Another problem is the information gap with regard to pollution from other rivers. The Danube is very carefully monitored, but it is not the case with the other rivers. It's difficult to make comparisons without such data. **Dr. PETROV** conceded that they are just at the preliminary stage of the project. Scientists will make an assessment how much it will cost. Society / the public must know that clean environment has a price. Scientists must tell the people how much they should pay to save the Black Sea. **Dr. VELIKOVA** asked about the implications of using H<sub>2</sub>S on the anaerobic zone, and **Dr. PETROV** provided information about the scientific expedition of his colleagues from Sevastopol in the summer of 2007.

**Dr. LIVIU MURESAN** from Bucharest<sup>3</sup> asked three questions about (1) the implications in short, medium and long term of the accident in the Danube delta (the Bystroe canal), (2) the

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<sup>3</sup> See his institutional affiliation under Panel III below.

future of the Rhein-Main-Danube canal and (3) the effects of climate change on the Danube river. **Dr. WELLER** expressed the view that global climate change will influence the strategies related to pollution control and to navigation with respect to the amount of water. In the case of the Bystroe canal, actions were undertaken without consultation with neighbours and other governments. The responsibility of the countries if they are engaging in projects, which can affect other states, is at least to notify the countries of the works. **Mr. ROUAM** added on aspects of the relations between Romania and Ukraine in the light of the ESPO convention.

The final question was posed by **Dr. PETROV**. Given the existence of several commissions and agencies that deal with Danube and Black Sea environment, is there a need to establish one single body that will cover all the aspects of cooperation, and is DABLAS such kind of structure? **Mr. ROUAM** underlined that the objective of the DABLAS Task Force is to identify concrete projects. It has very focused activity. This approach is used for the Mediterranean Sea. The problem is how to switch from hot spots to solutions. He gave an account of the support of the European Investment Bank for the projects. **Dr. WELLER** remarked that the different actors should work together in the areas where it is necessary. There is no need to create new institutions but make the existing ones work well and cooperate effectively with each other.

### **Panel III. The Danube and the Black Sea – Connecting Regions and Neighbours through Transport and Infrastructure Links**

By way of introduction, the moderator, **Dr. ERHARD BUSEK**, Chairman of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe, Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, Brussels, highlighted the linking function of the Danube River, which determines its significance. He indicated that it is not necessary to develop plans, proposals and visions because there is a need of results for the region and, for that reason, all have to come down to the ground.

The first panelist, **Mr. YAVUZ MILDON**, President of the Chamber of Regions and Vice-President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities with the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, noted that the reinforcement of cooperation in the Black Sea and Danube regions is related to bridge-building between the peoples living in this area, between the countries, regions and municipalities of the Black Sea basin in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres. Mr. Mildon presented the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, which acts as a real engine for launching several "euro-regional" initiatives. The Congress wishes to contribute in particular to tackling the challenges of European semi-closed seas by promoting increased co-operation between local and regional authorities located in proximity to these seas. The creation of Euro-regions around European seas can be considered as a tool to achieve greater economic and social cohesion at the level closest to the citizen and to establish better economic and cultural links. The first step taken by the Congress was the creation, in June 2007, of the Adriatic Euro-region established in Pula (Croatia). The entire Adriatic area is expected to benefit from the existence of this permanent, broad-based organisation for the co-ordination of co-operation initiatives between riparian states.

The Black Sea Euro-region initiative launched by the Congress is now at an advanced stage of realization after three international conferences held in Constanta, Samsun and Odessa. Closer cooperation between local and regional authorities in this future Euro-region can contribute to a prudent use of the "Black Sea resource" while at the same time providing stability and welfare for the population of the basin. This co-operation platform bringing together the administrations of the regions surrounding the Black Sea will also promote and encourage regionalisation processes and play an important role in developing the management skills of local and regional authorities. The following activities could be performed by the Black Sea Euro-region: consolidation of good governance; improvement of the management skills of territorial authorities; establishment of the citizen's right to participate in public administration; development of fruitful dialogue between residents; promotion of an "environmental care" culture; improvement of sustainable tourism.

**Mr. LEONIDAS CHRYSANTHOPULOS**, Secretary General of the Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS) of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation (BSEC) in Istanbul, provided an overview of the activities of BSEC as an organization, which attributes an enormous importance to transport infrastructure projects. For the first time in its history it has signed (in Belgrade on 19 April 2007) two Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) – on the Coordinated Development of the Black Sea Ring Highway and on the development of the Motorways of the Sea.

The Black Sea Ring Highway, 7100 km long, aims to upgrade the existing road infrastructure into a 4-line highway and to create a ring-road around the Black Sea. The finalization of this

project will facilitate intra-BSEC trade as well as BSEC exports and, most importantly, it will connect the Black Sea road system to that of Europe and Asia. It may facilitate the solution of “frozen conflicts” in the area, because it has to pass through two such areas. It will also develop tourism and will promote BSEC to its people. But construction is only one aspect of the challenge. The other is that, once the highway is completed, efforts have to be made to speed up border control as well as visa facilitation for non-EU drivers.

The speaker described the Black Sea Ring Highway Caravan as an important project, which aimed to promote the signature of the MoU on the Black Sea Ring Highway to the BSEC people, to collect transport-related data en route such as border waiting times, procedures and charges as well as driver visa requirements in the BSEC region, and to evaluate road infrastructure along the official Black Sea Ring Highway routes.

The Black Sea Ring Highway is interconnected with the project for the Motorways of the Sea. Activities under this second MoU include: upgrading of port facilities, identification of projects of common interest, securing free competition, facilitation of access to all modes of transport, promotion of intermodality, enhancement of maritime security and safety in the Black Sea region.

These two projects are also in line with EU policy on the extension of major trans-European transport axes to neighbouring countries. These projects cover the South-Eastern axis and the Motorways of the Sea. BSEC is in consultation with TRACECA on these projects and will sign a MoU on cooperation. These important infrastructure projects will also affect in a positive way the Danube area by facilitating and increasing trade.

The moderator **Dr. ERHARD BUSEK** made a comment on concrete experience in the field of border management and customs. He pointed at the South-East European cooperative initiative (SECI), which was supported by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the World Bank for the implementation of projects. Dr. Busek noted that since the downfall of former Yugoslavia the transport capacity of the river Danube is used only up to 7-10%. There is a success story in the area of tourism. It increases from 21 ships to 130 ships sailing along the river.

**Prof. ALAN RILEY** from City Law School at City University – London, and Associate Research Fellow at the Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels, spoke about the topical issue of EU energy liberalization and its impact on the development of energy infrastructure. He departed from the belief shared by many people today that substantive EU energy liberalization is not going to happen, and he explained his opinion as to why it is likely to happen. He argued that traditional gas markets in Europe are closed and monopolistic, that competition is not a priority. The focus is more on predictability and stability, and long-term supply contracts are usually state owned. This classic European approach determines the current energy situation. As model examples he described the specific characteristics of the Italian model, of BulgarGaz and the British market. Liberalization in the United Kingdom began in the 1990s and there is separation of pipeline ownership from gas supply.

The trend to liberalize the EU energy market is determined by rising concerns that the monopoly arrangements for incumbents undermine the single market. High energy prices also act as a catalyst for this process. The first and the second legislative packages have not changed much the situation – prices remained high and there was no transparency and market integration. The new legislative proposals promise to make a breakthrough. They include the important principle of ownership unbundling, which, in Mr. Riley’s opinion, will change the energy market fundamentally and will lead to lower energy prices. The speaker underlined that energy infrastructure pressure is an important issues because the EU desperately needs

energy infrastructures rebuilt. The impact of these changes on the Black Sea area is related to the strategic geographic location of the region with regard to energy flows.

**Mr. SLAVCHO NEYKOV**, Director of the Energy Community Secretariat in Vienna, highlighted the specific activities of the Energy Community and the challenges which it currently faces. He underlined the fact that the Energy Community was initially limited to South-Eastern Europe, while today it unites seven countries and UNMIC. The EU is represented by the European Commission. The Energy Community currently has 7 contract parties and 4 observer countries (Turkey, Norway, Moldova and Ukraine). Georgia has also sent an official application to become an observer. The number of the parties involved increases.

The Energy Community covers a market, which unites more than 500 000 people. All this means an enormous capacity and potential but also serious challenges. Among the latter, the lack of investments and the social aspects of reforms have a special importance. Infrastructure development is a need for South-Eastern Europe, especially as regards electricity. The Secretariat has received 154 projects with concrete proposals by contracting parties in relation to their needs.

From a social viewpoint, the price of reforms has a different value for contracting parties. A Memorandum of Understanding on the social aspects of the Energy Community was signed on 18 October 2007 in Vienna with the objective to establish a platform for discussion. The approach, which is being targeted, is based on the strong need to place all stakeholders – governments, trade unions, companies – around the table to discuss these social aspects. The role of the regulators is of great importance here, because without regional rules there can be no common regional market.

The presentation of **Mr. FRANCOIS BEGEOT** in this panel was focused on the guidelines for transport in Europe and neighbouring regions. In 2007, the European Commission adopted a Communication on the extension of the major Tran-European Network (TEN) Axes to the neighbouring countries. The pan-European corridors (PECs) developed in the 1990s to link the EU15 with the then candidate countries became outdated. Today, progress in regional transport cooperation is based on three dimensions: the Western Balkans core network, the definition of a core network in Turkey, the Euro Mediterranean regional programme and TRACECA (the corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia). The aim of the Communication is to stimulate trade through better connections between the EU and its neighbours while using the European Neighbourhood Policy and the accession process as a tool. The recommendations of the Communication identified the need to revise the concept of the PECs in the following ways: to extend the geographical coverage of the concept of the PECs to fully take into account the revised trans-European network policy; to extend the relevant internal market principles and rules to the neighbouring countries by underlining the importance of non-infrastructure measures; to strengthen coordination and monitoring frameworks in order to ensure full commitment of the countries concerned and to enable pooling of resources towards sustainable development of infrastructure and enabling the projection of the Union's policies, including the social dimension.

In line with the recommendations of the High Level Group (which included representatives of the EU27, of 27 neighbouring countries and three international banks), the Commission proposed the following objectives: to adopt the five major transnational axes; to implement a number of horizontal measures in addition to infrastructure projects; to put in place strong coordination frameworks. The five transnational axes are as follows: Motorways of the Seas; Northern Axis; Central Axis; South Eastern Axis and South Western Axis. More than 20 measures were put forward in total, such as: speeding up border crossing procedures;

simplification and harmonisation of trade- and transport-related documentation; implementation of compatible new technologies; measures to improve safety and security in all transport modes; technical and administrative interoperability.

Mr. Begeot explained that the need to strengthen coordination frameworks corresponds to the following tasks: to ensure strong commitment and joint ownership to implement the measures in a timely and synchronised manner along the axes; to bring together the countries in a multilateral setting while at the same time enabling effective regional cooperation; to address development needs of infrastructure projects of mutual interest and attract/direct investments to these projects.

The moderator **Dr. ERHARD BUSEK** outlined the significance of Corridor № 7 and commented on the Rein-Main-Danube canal and on the need of deepening the Danube at specific locations. He emphasized the pivotal role of bridges. Vidin-Kalafat is a long-lasting issue and the construction should be started. In his view, a positive development was the construction of the container port in Constanta. Such structures are also needed in Varna and Bourgas. The development of the port in Lom and the improvement of the port in Russe is also of great importance.

**Dr. LIVIU MURESAN**, Executive Director of the European Institute for Risk, Security and Communication Management (Eurisk) – Bucharest, drew attention to the critical infrastructures in the Black Sea area and the Danube river basin, the axis of the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea and the Mediterranean Sea and the general dimensions of international cooperation in the region. In his view, the challenges for the countries in the Black Sea and the Danube region are related to the identification of critical infrastructures and to the implementation of the concept of Critical Infrastructures Protection and EU documents in the domain. It is also important to promote a regional Critical Infrastructures Protection Strategy in the framework of an EU Energy Strategy and to set up a Regional Center for Training and Research on Critical Services and Infrastructure Protection for Black Sea area and the Danube river basin.

The speaker presented the conclusions and recommendations of the conference on energy security and the role of transit countries, which took place in Bucharest on 2-3 March 2007. They address the issue of drafting a regional strategy for the protection of critical energy infrastructure, establishing an Association of energy transit countries and introducing a new concept of Good Energy Governance to be promoted by the European Commission, the United Nations and others. The European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection (EPCIP) identified several sectors of immediate interest, such as: energy; information, technologies and communications; water supply; food supply; health and medical support; finance; defense, public order and national security; administration; transport; chemical and nuclear energy; space technologies.

Dr. Muresan paid special attention to the geopolitical axis of the three seas: Caspian Sea – Black Sea – Mediterranean Sea. The old and the new major players in this area of interest are Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, USA and China. International rivers – and, more specifically, the linking projects Danube-Main- Rhein and Don-Volga-Neva – are also of great importance for this zone.

## Discussion

The moderator of the panel **Dr. ERHARD BUSEK** added to the discussions the dimension of the information society and the projects on electronics of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

**Mr. LEONIDAS CHRYSANTHOPULOS** asked a question about the link between price increases on the international oil market and the national energy markets. In case companies sell at a new price the oil, which they have imported at a lower one, what action will the European Commission take? In a brief comment related to this question, **prof. ALAN RILEY** stressed that there is a strange phenomenon on the energy market and it is related to the linkage of the oil price to the gas price. And this situation exists only for historical reasons.

**Mr. TOBIAS BERGNER**, Head of Section “EU Relations with CIS countries” at the German Federal Foreign Office, asked about the provisions for financing of the Black Sea Ringroad. **Dr. VIOLETA VELIKOVA** posed two questions: (1) Is there an environmental impact assessment for the Ringroad? (2) Is it possible to provide Clean Sea Net Services to the countries in the Black Sea region, and not only to EU member states?

**Mr. CHRYSANTHOPULOS** explained that the main idea for financing the Ringroad is to ask BSEC member states to make an estimate of the cost of construction on their respective territories countries and to decide what part can be covered by the national budgets. The remaining part of funding should be provided by international financial institutions. There is also a possibility to use financial resources within the framework of the EU’s bilateral programs with some of the countries, such as Ukraine and Moldova. The Black Sea Trade Development Bank will also play an important role. He answered the question about the environmental aspects of the Ringroad by stating that this is not a new road, and it will be build upon existing routes. However, environmental assessment will be considered in the next phases of the project.

**Mr. BEGEOT** indicated that the programme of the European Commission aims to make a reform rather than to finance infrastructure. Partnership with the private sector would be a possible solution for financing the Ringroad. However, project preparation is the most important. The European Commission will never finance a project, which is not economically viable. Therefore, the economic viability of the Ringroad has to be clearly demonstrated. Infrastructure should be designed in relationship with traffic flows. The European Commission would not much like to finance the Ringroad because it means a lot of work to achieve a modest result. The Commission may intervene at the stage of project preparation and supervision.

**Dr. ERHARD BUSEK** paid particular attention to air space as an important subject. Presently there is no regional airline system. For example, there are no airline connections between Belgrade and Bucharest and between Kiev and Kishinev. Another challenge is the improvement of the development of projects with regard to their implementation. Dr. Busek launched an interesting idea about the establishment of a Monitoring group, which would consider and assess progress made in the different fields of cooperation.

## **Panel IV. Synergies between Actors, Initiatives and Processes**

The moderator **Prof. DINKO DINKOV**, BECSA President and Jean Monnet lecturer at the University of National and World Economy – Sofia, introduced the panelists and outlined the integrative approach adopted by the organizers in designing this session.

The first panelist **Mr. ELIAS KALLIORAS**, Member of the Hellenic Parliament and Head of the Hellenic Delegation to the PABCES, Athens, introduced a geopolitical perspective by stressing the increasing significance of the wider Black Sea region in today's world – for Europe, the United States and other major powers – as a key transit area for energy supply and as a line of defence against many transnational and terrorist threats. It is also an important region for international organizations such as the EU and NATO, which aim to make the area beyond their external borders relatively stable. Several prominent issues have placed the region in the focus of international relation and interest. The speaker placed in this context the question of region building, which is directly linked to the concepts of mutual interdependence between states and of a specific identity shared by state and non-state actors. The rise of the new regionalism can be attributed to a series of factors, among which it is worth mentioning the development of new attitudes to international cooperation and to centralization and more than that to decentralization of the international system and the process of global economic change, which has increased the relevance of economic cooperation on a regional basis. The speaker referred to the EU and to BSEC as different models of regional cooperation.

Mr. Kallioras noted that development has long been seen as a function of economics but lately social and political disciplines have started to play an increasingly important role in what is called “sustainable development”. For development to be truly sustained, it has to be comprehensive. Proper functioning of normal life in a free society is a key element for success of the market economy and economic development. Therefore, discussion on the essential elements of a democratic society, such as strengthening of good and effective governance, adds a political dimension to regional economic cooperation. Good governance requires mediation of different interests in society to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interest of the whole community and how this can be achieved. It also requires an understanding of the historical, cultural and social context of a given society or community in order to secure a just and fair approach.

The speaker shared the view that economic integration through trade and investments is a process that requires measures to be taken not only within the strictly defined trade policies but also in the field of macroeconomic stability, infrastructure, the financial system, training, marketing, business attitudes, etc. The overall political climate is the strongest foundation, upon which economic integration should be based. Significant challenges still persist for the Black Sea region: creating a competitive environment, investing in physical capital, encouraging the role of the private sector, adapting and enforcing anti-corruption laws. Very important are also the educational and cultural networks because a powerful knowledge based economy cannot be developed without a high level of education. A social cohesion cannot exist without tolerance and respect for the culture of the others.

The Greek MP drew attention also to the need of creating an informal EU-BSEC committee.

In his contribution, **Mr. ATANAS PAPANIZOV**, Member of the European Parliament (Socialist Group / Plovdiv – Bulgaria) pointed to the interest for the Black Sea region

provoked within the institutions of the EU. Since the launching of the German presidency's initiative to pay more attention to this aspect of relations, there have been several discussions in the EP, including public hearings. The synergy has the aim not to replace the current policies but to add to these policies and to create a bridge between them for improving the development of the countries in the region. But development could be achieved not only by investments but also by harmonizing standards, approaches and rules. It is important to have common standards for the whole region in the fields of trade, economic cooperation and transport. It is necessary to start from the basics of international standards. Sometimes the designed norms are not exactly in line with the international norms and this may generate several problems, like, for example, in the case of labour standards, on which the EU insists.

The speaker indicated the role of the region in the fields of energy and transport. The EU is preparing a new (third) package of directives related to energy issues. A fourth one will be discussed next year, which will deal with issues like energy mix and technology.

Mr. Paprizov addressed the relevance of financial instruments for supporting the "Black Sea Synergy" initiative. The EU's effort to simplify the different instruments and to concentrate on the financing of specific projects is a positive trend because there are often duplications of initiatives and proposals. He also underlined that all efforts towards better coordination will bring positive results so that the Black Sea synergy becomes not only a vision but a road to real achievements and progress in the region.

## **Discussion**

**Ms. VIKTORIA-MIHAELA POPESCU** from the Policy Planning Division / Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bucharest, presented the Rumanian position on Black Sea regional cooperation. She emphasized that the country is faithful to a flexible, pragmatic and project-oriented approach to the region. Regional cooperation should be based on the overarching principles of the Black Sea Synergy and on the EU strategy for Central Asia. Ms. Popescu reminded that Rumania has created the Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership, which will continue the development of projects related to environment protection, cultural dialogue and civil society. The establishment of the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation is considered by Rumania as a very useful tool in promoting projects. The country is trying to settle the Headquarters of the Black Sea Euro-region in Constanta. Other regional organizations, such as the Community of Democratic Choice, should also play a relevant role. Rumania considers that the enlargement of NATO and the EU will be the main drivers for democratic reforms in the region and for the creation of a solid market economy.

**Dr. PLAMEN PANTEV**, Director of the Institute for Security and International Studies, Sofia, asked Mr. Paprizov about the need for streamlining in harmonization. He requested information about concrete acts of inter-blocking actors, initiatives and processes that require coping with this issue. If harmonization is to be introduced, what are the ways of dealing with this problem? **Mr. PAPANIZOV** referred to the different initiatives existing in the region – the Initiative for Cooperation in Southeast Europe (SECI) based on the Stability Pact, and also BSEC. There are several other initiatives with similar aims. In South-Eastern Europe there are good results – for example, in creating a framework of free trade agreements. The launching of another group of free trade agreements in the Black Sea area is debated now. A tool should probably be found to promote free trade agreements between countries that are part of the free trade area in the Western Balkans, on one hand, and those that are part of the free trade area of the Community of Independent States, on the other. In Mr. Paprizov's opinion there is

ground for a broader free trade area in the region for countries from both areas. He noted that, while having these initiatives in parallel, a more integrated approach should prevail in the time of globalization. He mentioned also SECI – the structure for trade facilitation launched by US State Secretary, and the special groups for Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Synergy should become the object of EU efforts both in Central Asia and the Balkans. Otherwise there will be too many separate initiatives and the common trust will be lost.

**Mr. KALLIORAS** expressed his concern that harmonization is very difficult process. In his view, it currently touches upon around 70% of legislation in Greece and all EU member states, which comes from Brussels. So this is forced harmonization agreed at another level. Mr. Kallioras noted that the Constitutional Treaty had special requirements on how national parliaments can propose harmonization and now they would not have this leverage for action. **Mr. PAPARIZOV** disagreed with his Greek colleague because the role of national parliaments is increased in the new Reform Treaty, so subsidiarity will become stronger. The provision that enhances the role of the national parliaments and their ability to say “no” to new European legislation is very important, in his view. This makes the EP a bit “jealous” but everyone should accept that national parliaments are the primary parliaments. **Prof. DINKOV** intervened that the Reform Treaty had really abandoned the constitutional approach. The role of the European parliament will rise, as well as the role of the national parliaments and all just should wait for the results.

As representative of one of the partner institutions associated to the organization of the conference, **Mr. KRASSIMIR NIKOLOV**, **Secretary General of the Bulgarian European Communities Studies Association (BECSA)**, commented on the reference to Black Sea regional identity building, which was made in the contribution of Mr. Kallioras. He drew the audience’s attention to the need not to focus exclusively on pipelines, on saving fish stocks or improving cargo routes, etc. If identity building is recognized as essential, due respect should be paid to the so called “human dimension” of the whole process of Black Sea regional cooperation. In his view, both aspects outlined in the discussion in this session are important – educational, cultural, people-to-people exchanges, on one hand, and good governance based on democratic principles, on the other. Mr. Nikolov argued that civil society is a key stakeholder in the whole process and is especially relevant for the human dimension of Black Sea regional cooperation. Non-governmental organizations can make significant contributions in the future at the various stages of regional cooperation – at the level of policy discussion and policy shaping, at the level of project development, and at the level of monitoring and evaluation. The proposal of Mr. Busek about the creation of a monitoring group should be welcomed; moreover, policy makers should find a decent place for civil society organizations in such a monitoring group.

**Dr. DENCHO GEORGIEV**, **Director for EU Affairs at the Bulgarian National Assembly**, asked Mr. Kallioras about harmonization with international standards as regards the Black Sea region and about the option to use existing institutions – and in particular BSEC – as instruments for regulatory alignment. **Mr. KALLIORAS** explained that theoretical concepts and real politics are not identical. There are different sources of regulation. In the case of environmental issues there are directives to be implemented. Other aspects provide more options for the states to act in line with their own initiatives. **Mr. PAPARIZOV** stressed that he believes in BSEC and hopes that the European Commission will also value its potential role.

## CONFERENCE CONCLUSIONS

**Mr. LYUBOMIR KYUCHUKOV, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria**, chose the appeal of Dr. Erhard Busek to all participants to “come to the ground” as a starting point for his conclusions. All conferences of this type have to face the dilemma prompted in this plea – the dilemma between talking and acting. In his view, it is important to have both of them.

Mr. Kyuchukov expressed his satisfaction that participants had ample possibility during the conference to discuss relevant issues, to develop visions, to think about common policies and common strategies; this means to prepare decision making and subsequent action. All parties involved made a very positive effort about networking and communication between experts, politicians, managers and academics. The next step will be networking and communication with public opinion, and that means NGOs and in more general terms – the people.

The next step will be achieving the critical mass for the processes and actions that were discussed. That means, first of all, accumulation of expert and public awareness for all problems that the countries are facing. Second, it means accumulation of ideas, reflections and responses to the challenges. The accumulation of projects dealing with the problems and the accumulation of results comes next. And finally – solving the problems and maybe generating new ones, so that we'll have the whole process starting again.

The speaker pointed to a very action-oriented talking during the conference: problems were identified, experience was shared and solutions were found. The discussion covered a large spectrum of issues – from the broadest political assessment of the situations in the Black Sea region and the Danube region to the concrete projects. The general idea of the conference is that this region faces new challenges: (a) within the region; (b) from a regional point of view with regard to the correlations between the Black Sea region and the EU; (c) from an interregional point of view – the interaction between players and factors in solving problems of regions such as the Black Sea, the Danube, South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus. The US and China were also mentioned in the discussions. So the conference had addressed a general, more global approach. The participants discussed issues that are of primary importance, such as energy, infrastructure, security, ecology, people-to-people contacts, as well as fundamental ideas, such as new regionalism.

Before summarizing the conclusions of the respective thematic conference panels, Mr. Kyuchukov outlined **the importance of the Black Sea and Danube regions**. He pointed that the Black Sea region went through important and dynamic processes of change in our modern time. We have witnessed: (a) the emergence of new states, (b) the adoption of new standards on human rights, democracy and rule of law by societies, (c) proliferation of regional initiatives and forums trying to introduce structure into this hectic dynamism. Together with

these political changes, the region's economic dynamism has been illustrated by an average annual GDP growth of about 5%, which globally ranks the region in the third place just behind East Asia and South Asia. The importance of the area as provider and supply route for energy resources is further underlined by the prognosis that the EU energy imports coming through the Black Sea region are soon to increase to 50% from the present volume of 40%. In the Bulgarian case it is essential to add that no less than 2/3 of the country's foreign trade go through our Black Sea and Danube ports.

The speaker referred to Minister Kalfin's statement that **Bulgaria supports an enhanced regional cooperation** based on the following principles: (1) Regional cooperation requires concerted efforts for the development and prosperity of the area. (2) It should be inclusive, embracing all countries in all forms of cooperation. (3) Synergy should be sought in the case of various regional initiatives and programmes in order to achieve complementarity among them. (4) Each country should have the possibility to decide at its own discretion against or in favour of joining certain initiative. (5) Regional initiatives should be co-financed by the partners in the region, also with the mobilization of international funds. In this respect the Northern dimension could be an example to follow. (6) Regional cooperation should be open, on one hand, and integrated in the policies of the EU, on the other.

Mr. Kyuchukov then offered summaries of the thematic panels.

The first panel on **THE NEW EU MARITIME POLICY** took as a point of departure the understanding that EU maritime regions account for some 40% of the EU GDP and population and 90% of the EU's external trade. The new comprehensive approach by a new Integrated Maritime Policy towards the surrounding seas needs timely interaction with the adjacent regions to meet common challenges like marine environment, maritime safety and security, energy security. The responses we propose will contribute to solve broader European tasks and concerns on globalization and competitiveness, sustainable development and climate change.

The conference expressed strong support for the introduction of a comprehensive EU maritime policy focused on sustainable development of the oceans and seas and the littoral areas, which integrates, enhances through the ensuing synergy and further expands the existing separate EU policies on, *inter alia*, maritime transport, industry, coastal regions, offshore energy, fisheries and marine environment. An integrated, inter-sectoral and multidisciplinary maritime policy based on the principles of good governance and ecosystem-based management and the twin pillars of the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs and the Gothenburg strategy for sustainable development has a great potential to enhance cooperation both within the EU and along the lines of the European Neighbourhood Policy. This is essential in the face of the challenges of the present day related to the acute global issues.

The conference welcomed the development and implementation of an integrated maritime policy which takes due account of the need for reconciliation between a multilateral and a regional approach and fully adheres to the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. The conference also commended the great effort put into the development of the new policy through a highly collaborative and transparent process.

The conference noted the streamlining of the merchandise fleet and the littoral and island development policies and the merging of the respective government bodies in Greece as a most encouraging sign of the viability of the integrated maritime approach.

The panel on **ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES IN THE DANUBE – BLACK SEA REGION** demonstrated a great interest towards the environment protection.

Several ideas met the general agreement of all the participants. Pollution problems of the Danube and the Black Sea are common and trans-boundary to all coastal countries and their solution need common efforts. Environment protection needs coordinated actions among actors at regional level, on one hand, and coordination with the EU policies and instruments, on the other hand. In meeting environmental challenges, international bodies, such as the Commission on the protection of the Black Sea against Pollution (Black Sea Commission), the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), the DABLAS Task Force, carry out very important and result-oriented activities. The interaction that was demonstrated between the Black Sea Commission and the ICPDR is impressive, and this experience is worth transferring to other river basins, e.g. Dniester, Dnepr, etc.

Important pillars of cooperation have been identified: (a) exchange of information and data based on continuous and uninterrupted monitoring; (b) priority to pollution prevention; (c) raising public awareness of environment problems and climate change; (d) fund raising for important environment projects; (e) technical support and cooperation between states in cases of oil spills and other environment disasters.

The countries of the Danube-Black Sea Region have demonstrated the following shared objectives: (a) to ensure protection of ecological resources and their rational use; (b) to halt the decline of biodiversity and to reduce the pollution; (c) to ensure sustainable water management and monitoring; (d) to define common principles and criteria for navigation; (e) to realize harmonization of environmental standards and norms; (f) to develop in partnership flood forecast and early warning systems.

It is encouraging – as has been shown on a videofilm – that common efforts do bring tangible results in restoring ecosystems in the waters of the Danube and the Black Sea. However, the fundamental challenge of the region is to increase economic prosperity without endangering the ecological equilibrium. Summarizing the views expressed by participants, it should be specially noted that they agreed on the essential importance of the consensus building process, the need of solidarity and the full commitment of the countries involved. The Danube and Black Sea region is a special, but also a very vulnerable area. Therefore, environmental protection should be a political priority. With a view to its great significance it is time for all countries of the region to act, because success comes from facing challenges.

The presentations made in the third panel on **INFRASTRUCTURES** provided an adequate picture of the challenges and opportunities for energy and transport in the region while mapping out the measures to be taken. Speakers and participants discussed the primary role of strengthening interconnectivity, investments, facilitating mobility, dismantling physical barriers and enhancing maritime safety and security as well all the positive social, economic and political effects that will flow from this for the region.

The conference was acquainted with two concrete and substantial projects developed by the BSEC, which are being implemented: the Black Sea Highways and the Black Sea Motorways of the Sea. They will upgrade infrastructure and create a ring in the Black Sea facilitating trade and exchange. They are likely to have an important impact on the solution of some frozen conflicts by overcoming the isolation of these areas. Some issues in the forthcoming Memorandum of Understanding for the Black Sea Motorways of the Sea, such as speeding up of border controls and visa facilitation, are still to be discussed with the EU. The two projects discussed during the conference are in line with the EU's extension of TENs to neighbouring countries, in particular with the aim of linking the South Eastern Axis with the Central Axis. The ultimate purpose is to contribute to the flourishing of maritime transport in the Black Sea.

Conference participants appreciated a very valuable contribution from the Commission presenting the January 2007 Communication on the extension of the TENs to neighbouring

countries. Now, when  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the Pan-European corridors fall inside the EU after successive enlargements, the concept of the TENs has received a new impetus. Whereas transport, with its globalizing nature, is one of the main drivers for competitiveness, which enables the genuine functioning of the EU internal market, the rationale behind extending the geographic coverage of the TENs is also the spreading of the relevant internal market principles and standards to neighbouring countries in Black Sea region. The extension of infrastructures creates the prerequisites for approximation of neighboring countries to EU and international standards and regulatory practices. The EU is promoting interconnectivity on an intercontinental scale as by extending TENs. Europe will ultimately be linked in transport terms with the emerging powers from other continents – China, India, etc.

The liberalization of energy markets, which is the core of the ambitious third EU liberalization package presented in September 2007, will definitely bring benefits for consumers in lowering of the prices, more investment activity, increased competition due to entrance of new operators in the market. It was argued that a substantial liberalization of the energy market is feasible and will help overcome the risks of vertical foreclosure, market concentration and abuse of dominant position.

The conference agreed that the Energy Community Treaty serves as a model and example to be benchmarked for regulatory alignment with the EU internal energy market acquis by the countries in the region that are not members of the EU. This could lead to the creating of an unprecedented energy market of more than 400 million inhabitants. On the other hand, participants were alerted about the specific and considerable challenges facing the contracting parties to the Energy Community Treaty – lack of infrastructure investments, generating capacities, energy deficits and blackouts in some cases, undermined security of supply, important social burden and prices difficulties to meet energy needs. Around 150 projects presented by the countries in order to cover their needs were presented as a constructive move to remedy the situation and justified the strong appeal by the speaker to donors, including the EU, for support and make viable the short list of core projects.

In the end, Mr. Kyuchukov shared his **GENERAL CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CONFERENCE**.

This forum should be seen as part of a process. After the Berlin conference on the Black Sea of May 2007, the current conference is directed to the objective of finding the correlation between the Black Sea and the Danube, and there is a space and a need for follow up in that discussion.

Further efforts should be concentrated on several levels: (1) **Interaction within the region**: That means tackling the issues on regional level and establishing the notion of regional ownership in practical terms. There is a real progress in South-Eastern Europe and practical steps in the other regions as well. (2) **Relations with the EU**: A crucial step forward was done this year during the German presidency because the Black Sea Synergy gave the basis for further policy development. No efforts should be spared to move beyond the Black Sea Synergy because there is a need of a policy and a strategy for the region. There are a solid basis and a lot of challenges in front of all countries. (3) **Global issues**: That means the role and the place of this region in the global world and the interests of different players.

The final conclusion resulting from this forum is that the participants have created something that is called “**network of networks**” – coupling different structures, forums, factors that are interested in solving specific issues and that would create the basic network which is needed for solving current problems on a higher / political level.

## PROGRAMME OF THE CONFERENCE

*Friday, 16 November 2007*

**13:30 Registration of participants, the Boyana Residence**

**14:00 Welcome and Introduction**

Georgi PIRINSKI  
Chairman of the National Assembly of Bulgaria

**14:15 Keynote Speeches**

Gernot ERLER  
Minister of State at the German Federal Foreign Office, President of Southeast Europe Association  
Ivailo KALFIN  
Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria

**15:00 Panel I. The New EU Maritime Policy – Main Challenges for the Region**

**Moderator:**

Dimitris TRIANTAPHYLLOU  
Director General, International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS), Athens

**Panelists:**

Krassimira MARTINOVA  
Deputy Minister of Transport of Bulgaria

Mircea CIOPRAGA  
Member of the Chamber of Deputies, Vice Chairperson of the Committee for Industries and Services, Head of the PABSEC Romanian Delegation, Bucharest

Marusya LYUBCHEVA  
Member of the European Parliament, Sofia

François BEGEOT  
Policy Officer, DG Transport and Energy, European Commission, Brussels

Georgios BARKATSAS  
Commander Hellenic Coast Guard (H.C.G.); Directorate for Shipping Policy and Development, Hellenic Ministry of Mercantile Marine-Aegean and Island Policy, Athens

**16:30 Coffee Break**

**17:00 Panel II. Environmental Challenges in the Danube-Black Sea Region**

**Moderator:**

Konstantin PETROV  
Institute of Electrochemistry and Energy Systems (IEES), Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia

**Panelists:**

Philip WELLER  
Executive Secretary, International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), Permanent Secretariat, Vienna

Violeta VELIKOVA  
Permanent Secretariat, Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution, Istanbul

Claude ROUAM  
Head of Unit Enlargement and Neighbouring Countries, DG Environment, European Commission, Brussels

**18:45 End of Discussions**

**19:00 Reception hosted by Mr. Georgi Pirinski, President of the National Assembly of Bulgaria, the Boyana Residence**

*Saturday, 17 November 2007*

<b>9:00 Panel III. The Danube and the Black Sea – Connecting Regions and Neighbours through Transport and Infrastructure Links</b>
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**Moderator:**

Erhard BUSEK  
Chairman of the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe, Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, Brussels

**Panelists:**

Leonidas CHRYSANTHOPULOS  
Secretary General of the Permanent International Secretariat, Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), Athens

Alan RILEY  
City Law School, City University, London and Associate Research Fellow, Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels

Slavcho NEYKOV  
Director, Energy Community Secretariat, Vienna

François BEGEOT  
Policy Officer, DG Transport and Energy, European Commission, Brussels

Liviu MURESAN  
European Institute for Risk, Security and Communication Management (Eurisk), Bucharest

**10:45 Coffee Break**

<b>11:15 Panel IV. Synergies between Actors, Initiatives and Processes</b>
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**Moderator:**

Dinko DINKOV  
BECSA President, Jean Monnet Lecturer at the University of National and World Economy, Sofia

**Panelists:**

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Member of the Hellenic Parliament, Head of the Hellenic Delegation to the PABSEC, Athens

Atanas PAPARIZOV  
Member of the European Parliament, Sofia

Yavuz MILDON  
President of the Chamber of Regions, Vice-President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Council of Europe, Strasbourg

<b>12:30 Conclusions</b>
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Lubomir KYUCHUKOV  
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria

**13:00 End of the Conference**

**13:15 Lunch hosted by Mr. Lubomir Kyuchukov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria, the Boyana Residence, Lyulin Hall.**

## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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