

Black Sea NGOs Forum: Aurescu states blue economy can contribute substantially to post-COVID-19 recovery

Blue economy may contribute substantially to post-COVID-19 recovery, as well as to the ecological transition in the spirit of the Paris Agreement and the Green Deal, stated on Monday the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bogdan Aurescu, on the occasion of his participation in the opening session of the 13th edition of the Black Sea Non-Governmental Organizations Forum.

The forum this year is taking place over five days (November 23-27) with the theme "Advancing Civil Society Cooperation in the Black Sea Region in Times of Uncertainty" and is organized by the Non-Governmental Organizations for Development - FOND, with the support of the European Commission and under the high patronage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE) of Romania.

In his intervention, Minister Bogdan Aurescu emphasized Romania's commitment towards regional cooperation and the durable economic development in the Black Sea region. In that context, he mentioned the progress realized in the implementation of the Black Sea Synergy during the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, in the first half of 2019, through the adoption of the joint maritime agenda for the Black Sea and the strategic agenda for research and innovation in the Black Sea region, as well as the results of the Chairmanship-in-Office of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), which Romania holds this year, mentions a press release of the MAE sent to AGERPRES.

Minister Aurescu emphasized the role of civil society in promoting and implementing cooperation projects in the region, on the basis of its close relations with the local communities and the experience in running multisectoral partnerships, in view of achieving common objectives. The Romanian high official emphasized the role of non-governmental organizations in consolidating the resilience of societies and consolidating democracy, as essential stakes for a better future of any society, be it in the Euro-Atlantic space, or in the Black Sea region or beyond it. In this context, Bogdan Aurescu recalled the fact that Romania offered recently, from the budget for assistance for development managed by the MAE, through the European Endowment for Democracy, a 250,000 euro contribution with the purpose of implementing projects in support of civil society and independent press in the Republic of Moldova, as well as a contribution worth 100,000 euro to support civil society and independent press in Belarus, the quoted source also mentioned.

The Black Sea NGOs Forum was launched in 2008, with support from the Romanian MAE, through the funds for official assistance for development, and the Black Sea Trust/German Marshall Fund of US. Starting with 2013, the European Commission became a partner of the Romanian MAE in financing the initiative. The first editions took place in Bucharest and southeastern Constanta. Since 2014, the Black Sea NGO Forum is organized, by rotation, in other states of the Black Sea region. In 2018, the forum conducted its works, as a first, in Brussels. In 2019, a new premiere followed, by the organization of the event in Turkey, in Istanbul. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020, the event is organized, for the first time, exclusively online.

The forum was thought out as an annual project to implement the principles of the Black Sea Synergy - The European Union Communication of 2007 that guides presently the EU's approach in the region. The role of the Forum was to create a space for debate, to share expertise and to stimulate communication and initiatives between representatives of the civil society, with the support of governments, international organizations and foreign donors active in the Black Sea. Along the years, the Forum offered the opportunity to the participants to exchange good practices and to start joint projects in domains such as democracy and human rights, local development, children's rights, environmental protection, civic participation, youth involvement, etc.