

# BLACK SEA STAKEHOLDER CONFERENCE 2025

Constanța, Romania  
28 October

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## SUMMARY REPORT



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Common Maritime Agenda  
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# CONTENT

Concept and Objectives	<u>3</u>
Conference metrics	<u>6</u>
Opening Session	<u>8</u>
Scene setter panel	<u>9</u>
Panel Sessions “Black Sea today and tomorrow”	
1. Ocean literacy for marine ecosystem resilience	<u>11</u>
2. Emerging innovations in energy transition and spatial planning	<u>12</u>
3. Financing innovation and start-ups at coastal community level	<u>13</u>
Waves of change: Showcasing regional projects that make a difference	<u>14</u>
Poster Exhibition	<u>15</u>
Parallel workshops: Civic agora debate for coastal communities’ resilience	
a. Ocean literacy and innovative blue skills	<u>17</u>
b. Maritime spatial planning and offshore renewable energy	<u>18</u>
Black Sea Project Awards	<u>19</u>
United efforts for a resilient Black Sea: Pledges graphic	<u>20</u>
Closing remarks	<u>21</u>

# CONCEPT & OBJECTIVES

Following the previous year, the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) of the Black Sea hosted its Annual Stakeholder Conference on 28 October 2025 in Constanța, Romania. The event was organised by Ukraine and hosted by Romania in support of the Ukrainian CMA Coordinator, given the challenges posed by Russia's ongoing war of aggression.

The CMA Stakeholder Conference has consistently sought to bring together the diverse stakeholder base of the Black Sea blue economy, strengthening collaboration and improving alignment with the CMA's goals and priorities. Its format reflects this ambition: active audience participation is embedded throughout the panel discussions, with online tools enabling real-time questions, while workshops provide a space for cooperative problem-solving on blue economy challenges identified directly through stakeholder feedback gathered over the preceding year. With the direct and active involvement of national and European policymakers, the Conference aims to bridge gaps and reinforce dialogue between local communities and high-level policy.



# CONCEPT & OBJECTIVES

The Conference's thematic foundation remains aligned with the three goals of the Common Maritime Agenda: ensuring healthy marine and coastal ecosystems; supporting a competitive, innovative and sustainable blue economy; and fostering investment



## OPENING SESSION

An opening ceremony took place with welcoming messages by the Black Sea Assistance Mechanism, the Ukrainian National Coordinator, and the European Commission (DG MARE)

## SCENE SETTER PANEL

This year, a setter panel was held to connect Black Sea priorities with the latest European initiatives relevant for the region, such as the European Ocean Pact and the EU's new strategic approach to the Black Sea.



## THREE PLENARY SESSIONS

Three panel sessions followed under the overarching theme Black Sea Today and Tomorrow, featuring experts from across the region. These explored: ocean literacy for marine ecosystem resilience, emerging innovations in energy transition and maritime spatial planning, and financing innovation and start-ups at coastal community level.

# CONCEPT & OBJECTIVES

Now a tradition, the project poster exhibition showcased ongoing initiatives and enhanced their visibility. This year, a new plenary segment, Waves of Change, was introduced to give emerging projects the opportunity to present their ideas and exchange advice with participants.



**SHOWCASING REGIONAL PROJECTS**  
Pitch presentations of 3 regional projects, followed by 5-minute audience advice intervention



**PARALLEL WORKSHOPS**  
Two interactive workshops to invite stakeholders in exchanging ideas and create future project proposals for a resilient and inclusive Black Sea future



**BLACK SEA PROJECT AWARDS**  
Three awards granted in the categories as recognition of the project's outstanding performance, promoting the key CMA goals



**CLOSING**  
Key conclusions of the Conference and graphical representation of the pledges

# CONFERENCE METRICS



COUNTRIES



SIDE EVENTS\*



PARTICIPANTS

## CONFERENCE EVALUATION



GENERAL SCORE OF PARTICIPANTS' SATISFACTION



EVALUATION OF LOGISTICS



SESSION INFORMATION EVALUATION

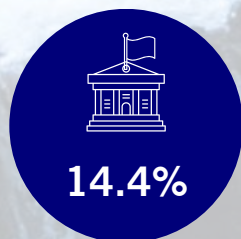


EVALUATION OF CO-CREATION WORKSHOPS

## PARTICIPANTS' ORGANISATIONS



EU INSTITUTIONS



NATIONAL AUTHORITIES



FUNDING PROGRAMMES



NGOs



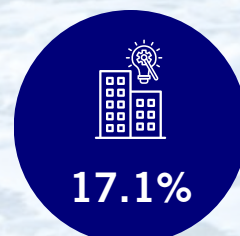
ACADEMIA



PRIVATE COMPANIES



OTHERS



RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS

\*ON 29 OCTOBER 2025, THREE SIDE MEETINGS TOOK PLACE: THE STEERING GROUP MEETING, THE TECHNICAL GROUP MEETING ON COASTAL AND MARITIME TOURISM, AND THE TECHNICAL GROUP MEETING ON SUSTAINABLE AQUACULTURE.



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# OPENING SESSION

The 2025 Black Sea CMA Stakeholder Conference opened in Constanța, Romania, under the theme “Make Waves Together”, a strong call for unity and cooperation to address economic, social, and environmental challenges in the Black Sea region. The opening session set the tone for the event by welcoming participants and underscoring the indispensable role of partnership in shaping the Black Sea’s future. Particular emphasis was placed on Ukraine’s continued commitment to ocean protection, shown by its recent signing of the UN High Seas Treaty, despite ongoing conflict.

The choice of venue, the iconic Constanța Casino, provided a striking backdrop for reflection. Standing resilient at the boundary between land and sea, the historic building served as a symbolic reminder of both the vulnerability and the potential of the Black Sea region’s future.

[SESSION AVAILABLE HERE](#)



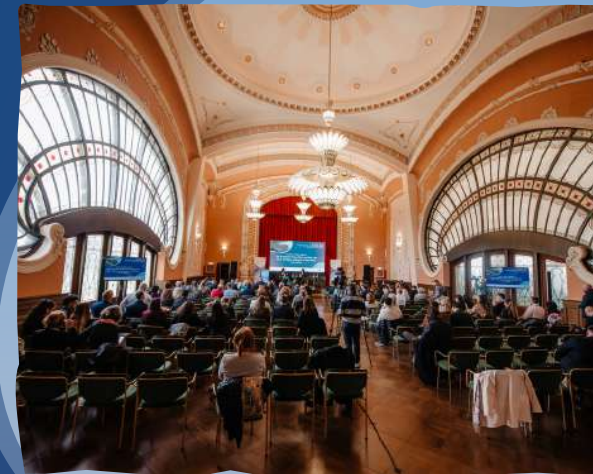
# SCENE SETTER PANEL

## The EU Ocean Pact and the new EU's strategic approach to the Black Sea region

The session demonstrated how the EU's strategic approach to the Black Sea aligns with the CMA and outlined a dynamic, security-oriented strategy built on resilience, connectivity and preparedness. .

### KEY OUTCOMES

- New policy frameworks: the new EU Strategic Approach to the Black Sea and the EU Ocean Pact
- Flagship initiatives, the Black Sea Maritime Security Hub and the coastal community preparedness agenda, as concrete steps to support regional stability and a sustainable blue economy
- Preparing for the Maritime Spatial Planning Directive revision and the new Ocean Act, both of which will modernise policy integration and reinforce a land-to-sea approach rooted in community engagement
- Expecting more competitiveness, digitalisation, and innovation in regional projects



[SESSION AVAILABLE HERE](#)



# THREE PLENARY SESSIONS

Key topics of the Black Sea today and tomorrow



1) Ocean literacy for marine ecosystem resilience

2) Emerging innovations in energy transition and spatial planning

3) Financing innovation and start-ups at coastal community level

# PLENARY SESSION 1

## Ocean literacy for marine ecosystem resilience

The main focus of the session was to turn scientific knowledge into practical skills through maritime training, sustainable resource use, and engagement with seafarers and coastal communities, and to advance ocean literacy as a driver of ecological resilience and behavioural change.

### KEY OUTCOMES

- Local initiatives already support ocean literacy via citizen science, marine litter monitoring, and data sharing with European platforms
- Behavioural change needs emotional connection and visible impact; global issues must be linked to local realities
- Consistent community involvement can shape national policy
- For the Black Sea, a basin-wide ocean literacy initiative is recommended, building on existing structures with better coordination, visibility, and shared commitment

### QUOTE

**“Each small action contributes to the large-scale change we need—ocean literacy must become something people live, not just something they know.”**



# PLENARY SESSION 2

## Emerging innovations in energy transition and spatial planning

The second session was aimed at exploring the future of the Black Sea's low-carbon blue economy, with emphasis on fisheries and aquaculture as part of the EU energy transition, highlighting that innovation is efficiency. The session also focused on integrating maritime spatial planning to balance renewable energy, conservation, fisheries, tourism and cultural heritage.

### KEY OUTCOMES

- Need for nature-inclusive, climate-smart planning and cross-border cooperation
- Challenges are in data gaps, political commitment, and local technical capacity
- Importance of training, communication, and merging coastal and marine planning into a coherent system
- Emerging innovations: floating multi-use infrastructure and offshore hydrogen concepts show regional potential
- Inclusive processes and local engagement are essential to ensure innovation benefits communities

### QUOTE

**“Energy transition is not only about new technology—it is also about energy efficiency, and that means reducing costs directly for coastal communities.”**



# PLENARY SESSION 3

## Financing innovation and start-ups at coastal community level

The third session focused on how financial instruments and partnerships can turn ideas into meaningful change, and on driving innovation to tackle Black Sea's pollution through global participation and tailored support for both advanced and early-stage concepts.

### KEY OUTCOMES

- Regional cooperation instruments are vital, with transnational projects supporting environmental monitoring, aquaculture technologies, and citizen–researcher–authority collaboration
- Lessons from other EU sea basins show the value of aligned strategies and capitalising on results to strengthen resilience
- Local perspectives highlight portfolio-based recovery strategies, where cities under crisis test business ideas, promote blue economy solutions and attract international partners
- SMEs are developing innovations, from environmental monitoring to recycling war debris into construction materials, demonstrating creativity under extreme conditions

### QUOTE

**“We want not just to identify winners, but to build a permanent culture of innovation across the Black Sea.”**



# WAVES OF CHANGE

Showcasing regional projects that make a difference

The session included the presentation of three pioneering projects tackling environmental and economic challenges in the Black Sea region with these actionable solutions.

**BlackNETs project** combats marine plastic pollution by targeting "ghost gear" (abandoned or lost fishing equipment) through prevention, removal, and recycling initiatives, while fostering cross-border collaboration and awareness campaigns like #GhostBuster

**AlgaeRevive project** tackles eutrophication and nutrient pollution by deploying an AI-driven monitoring tool, AlgaeSense, and converting harmful algal blooms into valuable resources for industries, aligning with EU sustainability goals

**INTERSMARTS project** promotes smart, sustainable tourism through a transnational innovation network and digital platform connecting academia, business and policy

[SESSION AVAILABLE HERE](#)



# POSTER EXHIBITION

The 2025 Poster Exhibition showcased 16 initiatives driving sustainability, scientific progress and community engagement across the Black Sea region. Projects ranged from ecosystem restoration and blue innovation to responsible research, pollution monitoring and youth involvement, reflecting a dynamic regional commitment to a healthier marine environment

## KEY OUTCOMES

- Ecosystem resilience through innovative local approaches
- Technological progress: AI-driven seabed mapping, smart buoys, drones and algae aquaculture
- Ecosystem resilience through innovative local approaches
- Technological progress: AI-driven seabed mapping, smart buoys, drones and algae aquaculture
- Open science and FAIR data to connect research, policy and society
- Biodiversity protection: sturgeon conservation and Marine Protected Area planning tools
- Pollution response with remote sensing and co-created training programmes
- Community engagement: youth initiatives and small-scale fishers' participation



[POSTER EXHIBITION RESULTS HERE](#)

[SESSION AVAILABLE HERE](#)



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# PARALLEL WORKSHOPS

Civic agora debate for coastal communities' resilience

The workshops at the Black Sea CMA Stakeholder Conference 2025 focused on two critical themes: ocean literacy and innovative blue skills, and maritime spatial planning (MSP) and offshore renewable energy. Each session identified pressing challenges that require collaborative action and strategic solutions to advance sustainability in the region and finalised with project proposals ideas to be further explored by the community. Both workshops reinforced the importance of regional cooperation, inclusive governance, and targeted capacity-building to overcome these challenges and drive a sustainable future for the Black Sea.



[SESSION AVAILABLE HERE](#)



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# WORKSHOP SESSION 1

## Ocean literacy and innovative blue skills

This workshop session addressed key challenges in building ocean literacy and blue skills.

### KEY OUTCOMES

- Need for stronger legislation and initiatives to address gender gaps and promote women's leadership in maritime sectors
- Strategies required to increase stakeholders and community participation in coastal and marine protection
- Education & Training: Emphasis on pollution awareness in marine schools and aligning blue career pathways with evolving industry standards
- Promote collaboration between scientific fields to strengthen ocean literacy
- Improve channels between researchers and policymakers for evidence-based decisions
- Foster partnerships among institutions, civil society and stakeholders to accelerate progress



# WORKSHOP SESSION 2

## Maritime spatial planning and offshore renewable energy

This workshop session addressed sectoral conflicts in maritime spatial planning (MSP) and offshore renewable energy, where competing interests (aquaculture, fisheries, tourism, energy, transport) create environmental strain and governance fragmentation. It also explored solutions for data gaps, circular economy adoption, and security challenges in the region.

### KEY OUTCOMES

- Need for standardised, accessible data to support informed MSP decisions
- Circular Economy: Limited uptake identified; stronger integration into planning processes required
- Security Dimension: Regional instability calls for civil–military cooperation to align innovation with security measures
- Knowledge Sharing and collaboration among experts and stakeholders
- Policy Harmonisation: Development of common policies and best practices to guide sustainable MSP across borders



# BLACK SEA PROJECT AWARDS

This year's Black Sea Awards ceremony celebrated exceptional accomplishments across the Black Sea basin, honouring past successes in three distinct categories

Healthy marine and coastal ecosystems



A competitive, innovative and sustainable blue economy for the Black Sea



Fostering Investment in the Black Sea blue economy for the Black Sea



Winner of the Winners 2025 Category

The audience has spoken once more, awarding the title to...



# UNITED EFFORTS FOR A RESILIENT BLACK SEA: PLEDGES GRAPHIC

The Pledges Action at the Black Sea CMA Stakeholder Conference 2025 introduced a pioneering initiative, encouraging participants to commit to tangible steps toward a sustainable blue economy



## INSPIRE

Raise awareness among youth and underrepresented groups through education and community engagement

## PROTECT

Drive environmental action by reducing pollution, promoting responsible coastal management and circular economy practices

## INNOVATE

Advance technological and scientific solutions, including AI-driven tools and smart investments in the blue economy

## CELEBRATE

Promote cultural and ecological heritage through sustainable tourism and success stories, inspiring pride in the Black Sea's future

## SHARE

Foster open knowledge exchange, science-based decision-making and transparent data sharing

## COOPERATE

Strengthen sectoral and cross-border partnerships to build regional resilience

[FULL IMAGE AVAILABLE HERE](#)



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# CLOSING REMARKS

“The future of the Black Sea will be written not by any single country, project, or moment, but by the waves we choose to make together, braver, smarter and more united than ever before.”



[SESSION AVAILABLE HERE](#)

# BLACK SEA STAKEHOLDER CONFERENCE 2025

The Black Sea Stakeholder Conference 2025 was organised by the Black Sea Assistance Mechanism together with the Ukrainian CMA coordinator, CINEA and DG MARE

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