



## BSUN/BUA INITIATIVE FOR RE-LAUNCHING THE DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION IN THE BLACK SEA AND BALKAN REGION

Located at the crossroads of large global pathways from East to West and from North to South, the Black Sea and Balkan Region have facilitated over millennia an ongoing exchange of goods, values, and ideas. At the same time, it had its own share of confrontations and wars. It is known as a cradle of ancient and modern civilizations, but also as a space in which the clash of civilizations may be manifested.

In the current context of open conflict with unprecedented escalation and dangerous outcome, with millions of refugees and thousands of casualties, and with massive infrastructure disruptions and destructions, it is the intellectual, civic and social responsibility of us, the educators and scientists from the Universities of the region, to take a stand. We have both the responsibility and the capabilities to advance solutions to overcome the current situation, and to take a leadership role in the efforts to secure the peace, stability, and development of our region.

The priorities are evident: First, cease fire and de-escalation under a peace process framework involving the United Nations and other international organizations. Second, stabilization and reconstruction of the region, under a framework involving as key stakeholders the States, the universities, as well as the civil societies from the region.

The solution to the current crisis has an inherent regional dimension. That dimension requires a systematic, regional effort of coordination and cooperation as well as a solid foundation in local and regional knowledge, using analytical and normative perspectives robustly grounded in the economies and societies of the region.

We consider that BSUN and BUA are uniquely positioned to provide the knowledge infrastructure and leadership for the efforts to create a regional forum for exchange and development of ideas, visions, and policies, for scientific evidence-based decision making as well as for legitimacy building.

With these ends in view, we suggest the following actions:

- To initiate an internal consultation within the networks of the member universities, and to extend this process to partner organizations and media;
- To capitalize on the results of the discussions and debates during the International Congress on “Dialogue and Cooperation in the Black Sea and Balkan Regions” that have underlined the regional academic and research organizations and epistemic communities in the stabilization, reconstruction, and the sustainable development of the region;
- To initiate contacts with International Organizations, Chiefs of States and other stakeholders, organizations and decision makers;
- To organize under the BSUN and BUA framework with the participation of any other interested organization a large consultative and collaborative platform for supporting the Dialogue and Cooperation in the Black Sea and Balkan Region with a view to the stabilization, reconstruction, integration and development of the region.