



**INTERNATIONAL PERMANENT SECRETARIAT
BLACK SEA UNIVERSITIES NETWORK**

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PRESS RELEASE

Between October 12th and 15th, 2022, it took place the International Congress "*Dialogue and Cooperation in the Black Sea and Balkan Regions*", organized by the Black Sea Universities Network (BSUN) in collaboration with and by the direct involvement of the University of Bucharest. The event was also organized in collaboration with the Balkan Universities Association (BUA).

The works of the event were organized in physical presence at the University of Bucharest.

The organizers of the event were represented by Prof. Marian Preda, Rector of the University of Bucharest and Representative of Romanian Universities in the BSUN Executive Board, Prof. Sorin Costreie, Vice-Rector of the University of Bucharest and Prof. Mircea Dumitru, President of BUA at that time.

BSUN was represented by Prof. Karin Markides, President of BSUN for the 2020-2022 Mandate.

After the establishment in 1998 in Constanta, Romania, the Black Sea Universities Network has been welcomed by the entire academic community of the region developing continuously and becoming the main inter-university cooperation framework in the extended Black Sea region, including at present more than 110 universities from 12 countries of the Black Sea region.

Accepting the invitation of BSUN for the Congress organized this year, BUA decided to join the Congress and in this way, the event has been a broad forum

for the academic communities from the extended Black Sea region and the Balkans.

The Congress facilitated the participation of Rectors and Vice-Rectors of the member universities from the two organizations and partner communities, didactic staff and specialists from the higher education sector, representatives of ministries and decision-makers who contribute to the development of different activities on topics of current and strategic interest.

Written messages and video messages have been transmitted during the event on behalf of the following officials: Mr. Klaus Iohannis - President of Romania (message read by Mrs. Cătălina Galer, State Councilor), Mr. Nicolae Ciucă - Prime Minister of Romania (video message), Mrs. Mariya Gabriel - Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth (written message), Mr. Mircea Geană - Deputy Secretary General of NATO (video message) and Mr. Vasile Dîncu - Minister of National Defense (video message).

In the Opening Ceremony of the Congress, the following personalities participated in person and addressed speeches to the audience: Mrs. Ligia Deca - Minister of Education, Mr. Sebastian Burduja - Minister of Research, Innovation and Digitalization, Mr. Bogdan Aurescu - Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Iulian Chifu - State Advisor to the Prime Minister, Mr. George Tuță - Member and Questor of Chamber of Deputies, Mr. Erol Özvar - President of the Council of Higher Education in Türkiye, Mr. Pericles Mitkas - President of the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education and Mr. Emil Constantinescu - President of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Levant Culture and Civilization.

The event has been attended by representatives of the Diplomatic Missions accredited in Bucharest: H.E. Ambassador of the Republic of France in Romania Mrs. Laurence Auer, H.E. Ambassador of Italy in Romania Mr. Alfredo Maria Durante Mangoni, H.E. Ambassador of Poland in Romania Mr. Maciej Lang, H.E. Ambassador of Türkiye in Romania Mrs. Füsün Aramaz, H.E. Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of Greece in Romania Mr. Dimitrios Karakonstantis and H.E. Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendia - Apostolic Nuncio in Romania.

The Black Sea Economic Cooperation was represented by H.E. Ambassador Lazăr Comănescu, BSEC PERMIS Secretary General.

Mr. László Borbély, State Advisor to the Prime Minister, participated in the works of the Congress during the session dedicated to Sustainable Development.

The event was attended by the following representatives of international and regional organizations: Prof. Jeffrey Sachs - President of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (UN SDSN), Prof. Luciano Saso - President of the Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe (UNICA), Prof. Ivanka Popović - Member of the European University Association (EUA) Board, Prof. Remus Pricopie - President of the World University Consortium, Prof. Garry Jacobs - President of the World Academy of Art and Science, Prof. Nicolaos Theodossiou - President of SDSN Black Sea, as well as the members of the WAAS Board of Trustees.

The Congress provided a platform for discussions on the following topics: re-launching the dialogue and cooperation in the Black Sea and Balkan regions, the role of universities in the new regional and global context, the role of higher education in turbulent times, sustainable development in the Black Sea and Balkan regions, energy, suppressing the fake-news phenomena, propaganda and other societal challenges, the role of Networks, the role of education in human security, as well as defining pathways for the internationalization of universities from the Black Sea and Balkan regions.

At the Closure Ceremony of the Congress, BSUN and BUA signed an initiative for re-launching the dialogue and cooperation in the Black Sea and the Balkan regions. The initiative is calling for immediate actions and the use of all possible means to stop the conflicts in the Black Sea and Balkan regions and in this way to make possible the re-launching of dialogue and cooperation in the regions. The participating members of the Academic Community expressed their availability to contribute with science-based evidence for defining long lasting solutions to secure peace and cooperation in the region. The text of the document can be found at the following link: [BSUN-BUA Initiative](#).

Following the debates, it was concluded that the BSUN member universities are concerned by the problem of brain drain from the region and underlined the need to start a robust action to change this trend. In this context it was launched a call for the BSUN member universities to propose activities and possible initiatives that can be developed under the frame of BSUN to address this issue.

BSUN member universities engaged to put a strong emphasis during the next term on the promotion of new and more efficient ways of developing the university education processes on student-centered and purpose-oriented paradigms.

At the same time, the BSUN activities will be focused in the next period on topics related to human security, energy security, climate change, food security and digitalization.

A special attention will be given on the initiation of a regional cooperation framework on Black Sea Studies.

In this respect, the Black Sea Universities Network – International Permanent Secretariat will initiate dedicated actions for the development and implementation of the above-mentioned activities and the framework documents will be presented during the first session of the BSUN Executive Board.

Electronic voting procedures are currently underway in order to finalize the Presidency of BSUN for the Mandate of 2022-2024, respectively 2024-2026.

For additional information, please contact:

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