

Black Sea NGO Forum, 2011



In the period of October 6-8, 2011, in Bucharest, the Federation of Romanian Development NGOs together with the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation, European Commission and Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized the 4th Black Sea NGO Forum.

The CDCS was presented the project coordinator Mme Nelly Ajabyan.

The Forum brought together more than 200 organizations from the countries of the region as well as other stakeholders: Romania, Republic of Moldova, Republic of Azerbaijan, Turkey, Ukraine, Russian Federation, Georgia, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Albania, Armenia, Tunisia, USA, Sweden and Switzerland.

The Forum intended to create open space for dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation between representatives of civil society, governments of the countries and active NGOs in the extended Black Sea region.

Within the Forum important and actual topics were discussed: Black Sea region in 2011, EU Neighborhood Policy and its Eastern Dimension, the status of the Black Sea region in the EU regional cooperation, transition to democracy, policy of social support and children protection, democratization of the Black Sea region and NGOs' role in this field.

Panel discussions of the Forum were attended by officials from Romania (Traian Chebeleu – Deputy of BSEC Secretary General, Mihnea Constantinescu – Director General, MFA, Doru Costea – State Secretary, MFA), Turkey (Suat Kiniklioglu – AK Party), France, Germany.

BSCSIF participation to the Black Sea NGO Forum contributed to the extension of NGO network with the purpose of further cooperation within future projects of the Fund.

During the event more than 200 participants from various countries (among which Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Republic of Moldova, Turkey, Ukraine, Russia) debated on the main regional issues and tried to find common solutions to the current local and regional problems. The event was organized by the Romanian NGDO Platform (FOND), with support of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Representation of the European Commission in Romania and the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation.

The forum was attended by NGO representatives, experts and donors from region, Governments, other EU member states active in the wider Black Sea region, embassies, mass-media. Mr Staffan Nilsson, President of the European Economic and Social Committee, was one of the guest speakers, together with Mr. Doru Costea, State Secretary on Global Affairs – Romanian and Mr. Traian Ungurean – Member of the European Parliament (Rapporteur on “An EU Strategy for the Black Sea”). Mr. Nilsson stated his support for this event and stressed that *“Civil society is able to build partnerships and create and implement common projects. The projects developed by civil society in the last three years are excellent examples, but their number must increase. ”*

The Black Sea NGO Forum reiterated the importance of the Black Sea as an area of collaboration and interaction beyond the barriers and explores similarities and opportunities for joint action between countries in the Black Sea. The quality of governance, democratization, regional cooperation models, lessons learnt from the transition period, environmental issues, child protection, education, building leadership were some of the themes addressed in this edition.

The Forum aimed at increasing the level of dialogue and cooperation among NGOs in the wider Black Sea Region, building links and common projects in the region. The Representation of the European Commission in Romania awarded the **Black Sea NGO Award for Excellency** for a partnership to both the ARI Movement from Turkey and the Analytical Centre of Globalization and Regional Cooperation from Armenia. The aim of this award is to enhance the profile of the Black Sea Synergy and its role in proposing a regional, cooperative approach in the region, as well as the multilateral dimension of EU external policies.

Nelly Ajabyan

CDCS project coordinator