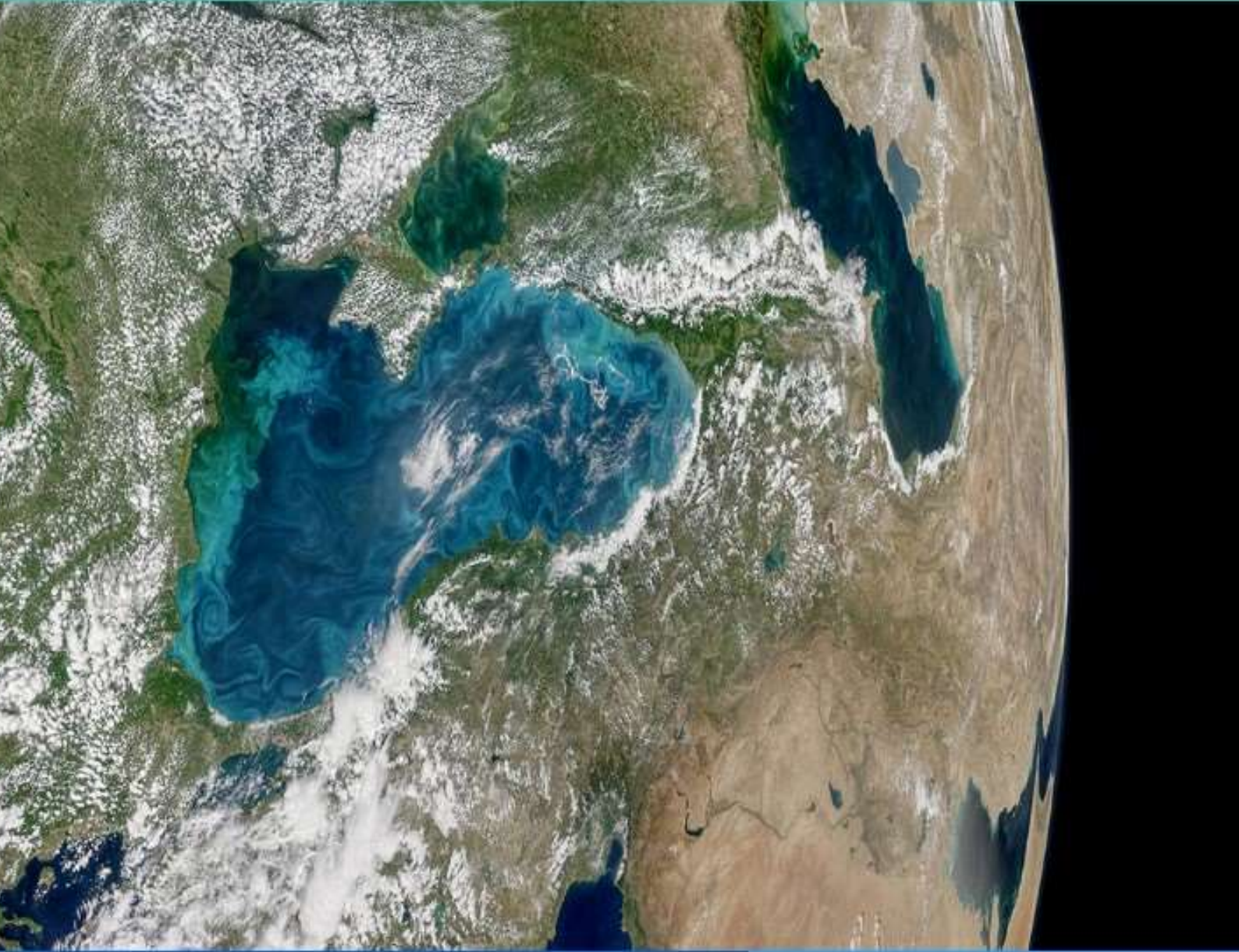


Black Sea CONNECT

Coordination of Marine and Maritime Research and Innovation in the Black Sea



D4.4 VISIBILITY AND DISSEMINATION FINAL REPORT



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The final report on Visibility and Dissemination provides the description and analysis of all communication and dissemination activities implemented within the last 27 months of the Black Sea CONNECT Coordination and Support Action (CSA) (01.04.2021-30.06.2023). All activities have been conducted following the Dissemination, Communication, and Exploitation Plan (DCEP) (D4.1) (M3, 31 December 2019) and within the first 18 months of CSA (Visibility and Dissemination Mid-Term Report, D4.3, 01 April 2021) that was submitted to the EC as deliverables.

Over the past 27 months of Black Sea CONNECT CSA, numerous stakeholders have performed visibility and dissemination activities employing a diverse array of tools such as events, social media, mass media, videos, ocean literacy activities, and more.

Black Sea CONNECT CSA has organised numerous events and represented in various platforms with the purpose of engaging with different stakeholders and ensuring cooperation for a sustainable blue economy in the region. Among them are Innovation Workshop, the Marine Litter Action Forum and the Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan Launch event, with a large number of stakeholders have been reached. Besides, Black Sea CONNECT CSA, Black Sea SRIA, and its Implementation Plan along with the blue economy in the Black Sea were promoted at numerous national, regional, and international level events, including the European Maritime Day 2023, 2022 UN Ocean Conference 2022, COP27 (T4.1).

During RP2 different ocean literacy and outreach activities were conducted to increase Black Sea awareness such as SciLabs in Kindergartens, Healing the Black Sea by Art Fair, Caravan on Blue Growth, and more in national, regional, and international levels (T4.2).

As young voices of the Black Sea, Young Ambassadors have achieved great success with their endeavours. They conducted various awareness-raising activities, including the “Visual Storytelling of The Black Sea” photo contest, the “Love your rivers to protect Black Sea” field trip, and social media campaign, “Youth Power Towards a healthy Black Sea” workshops. Additionally, they have represented Black Sea in different platforms such as EU Research and Innovation Days, EU Mission Ocean events, and more. Considering the positive impact and the remarkable achievements of the programme, the BSYA has been linked with the EU H2020 BRIDGE-BS project for ensuring its long-term sustainability. In 2022, a total of 15 ECOPs joined the Black Sea youth forces to drive change in our basin. They received several pieces of training and started their Black Sea journey (T4.3). Details of the programme will be given in D4.5.

To ensure extensive visibility and effective dissemination of the CSA, SRIA, and its Implementation Plan, different tools such as social media, press releases, mass media, online newsletters, videos and more have been used actively (T4.1-4.3).



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1. INTRODUCTION

Black Sea CONNECT aimed to coordinate the development of the Black Sea SRIA and its implementation plan both at the national and regional levels. The Black Sea SRIA and its implementation plan will guide stakeholders to address together with the fundamental Black Sea challenges, promote blue economy and economic prosperity of the Black Sea region, build critical support systems and innovative research infrastructure, and improve education and capacity building.

The **Black Sea CONNECT communication strategy** aims to reach the optimal extent of communication, dissemination, and exploitation of the project, its ongoing progress, and the resulting output through organization of relevant activities and appropriate channels to achieve outreach objectives relevant to each of the beneficiaries, stakeholders, and end-user groups. The visibility and dissemination activities are intended to improve understanding of the CSA, SRIA, and its implementation for the future of the Black Sea.

Communication and dissemination of the project are crucial for achieving the expected impact. As a result, the visibility activities have reinforced the understanding and adoption of the Blue Economy concept across a spectrum of stakeholders, encompassing Black Sea societies. To achieve this objective, our strategy was tailored to suit each distinct stakeholder group, and we used key dissemination channels to amplify overall expected impacts, in accordance with the Dissemination, Communication, and Exploitation Plan (DCEP).

This final report on visibility and dissemination covers a comprehensive account of all undertaken activities. These encompass events wherein Black Sea CONNECT was represented, awareness raising and outreach activities aimed at cultivate Black Sea literate societies, and youth support to reach a broader audience throughout the achievement of those goals. It also includes transcripts of communication mediums like websites, social media channels, news, and press releases.

Interconnection with other deliverables: The Dissemination, Communication, and Exploitation Plan serves as a dynamic reference and supports subsequent visibility related Deliverables (Table 1):

Table 1. Work Package 4 Visibility and Dissemination related deliverables

Deliverable	Month Due
D4.1 Dissemination, Communication, and Exploitation Plan	M3
D4.2 Press Kit and Project Website	M3
D4.3 Visibility and Dissemination mid-term Report	M18
D4.4 Visibility and Dissemination final report	M45
D4.5 Report on Black Sea Young Ambassadors' Activities	M45



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2. OBJECTIVES

Specific Objectives of Visibility and Dissemination

To ensure effective communication, dissemination, and exploitation, the WP4 of the Black Sea CONNECT undertakes activities finely tuned to stakeholders and focuses on a variety of tasks related to visibility enhancement, raising awareness, and uptake of results. The overarching goal is to establish a robust framework for effective external communication, dissemination, and optimal transfer of knowledge concerning project progress and applications, thereby facilitating the utilization of project outputs.

The specific objectives of the Black Sea CONNECT Visibility and Dissemination actions are as follows:

1. To develop dissemination, communication, and exploitation plan (DCEP), which will identify the target audiences and communities, communication strategies to be used, specific activities to promote the project outcomes as well as raise awareness on the subject.
2. To create a branding identity for the not only for the Black Sea CONNECT CSA but also making Black Sea as visible as possible through suitable promotional materials to address key target groups.
3. To establish appropriate communication and dissemination channels with research, policy, industry, and society.
4. To evaluate the existing experience and promote new and innovative approaches on cooperative training and co-education to improve the professional skills and competencies of those working and being trained to work within the blue economy in the Black Sea region.
5. To disseminate project results in a way that will reinforce the understanding, uptake of the Blue Growth concept among stakeholders and citizens.



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3. VISIBILITY AND DISSEMINATION

3.1. Dissemination Communication and Exploitation (T4.1, Lead METU)

"Dissemination, Communication, and Exploitation" have been critical to the success of Black Sea CONNECT CSA by ensuring that the blue economy in the Black Sea, SRIA, and its Implementation Plan have achieved widespread recognition, adoption, and contributed to broader societal advancements. To maximize the visibility of the Black Sea CONNECT, its activities, outcomes, and impact through the implementation of the DCEP (D4.1) used different mediums listed below.

3.1.1. Events, Meetings with the Stakeholders

Black Sea CONNECT CSA has organised numerous events and represented in various platforms with the purpose of engaging with different stakeholders and ensuring cooperation for a sustainable blue economy in the region, consulting them for creating a responsible and effective SRIA Implementation Plan together, as well as informing and activating them. Organizing events and taking part in existing events have been proved to one of the most efficient ways to do that.

3.1.1.1 Events, Meetings organised by Black Sea CONNECT

During the RP2, 3 major public events have been organised including the Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan Launch Event and Marine Litter Action Forum as well the second round of national consultations (Table 2, Figure 1).

Black Sea CONNECT Innovation Workshop (2 February 2022, Online): The Black Sea CONNECT Innovation Workshop took place online on February 2, 2022, with the participation of 245 attendees. Although originally planned as an onsite event, due to the surge of Omicron variant, the event was organized online. The workshop aimed to feature successful stories and best practices from different blue economy sectors, allowing the meeting of nascent maritime and innovation clusters in the Black Sea with more developed European counterparts and driving their collaborative development of Blue innovations for the region.

Event News: <http://connect2blacksea.org/press-release-on-black-sea-connect-innovation-workshop/>

Event Recordings: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIaykisdREY&t=2s>

Marine Litter Action Forum (MLAF) (14-15 November 2022, İstanbul, Türkiye): Marine Litter Action Forum took place on 14-15 November 2022 in İstanbul, Türkiye. More than 200 stakeholders from the EU and Black Sea academia, ministries, funding agencies, private sector, and NGO communities participated in the MLAF event where they had a chance to exchange best practices and planted seeds for future collaborations.



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The forum served as a platform for existing actions to be presented as well as emerging initiatives and ongoing projects in order to coordinate all efforts more holistically towards a litter-free Black Sea.

As well as R&I and policy sessions, different projects and scientific studies on plastic waste, marine litter, and the marine environment were shared at poster sessions. Moreover, booths let companies and start-up showcased their innovative solutions (such as the Tene start-up that produces eco-friendly, recycled USB cables).

Science met with art at the MLAF event. To draw attention to marine litter and other challenges in the Black Sea, two exhibitions took place. Attendees could have a chance to see stunning art pieces from the waste collected from the seas in the marine litter awareness-raising exhibition “Yüzleşme/Confrontation” by Şinasi Yelkenci. Along with that, there was a photo showcase of winner photographs of the “Visual Storytelling of the Black Sea: Different Shores, Different Reflections, and One Sea” Photo Contest, driven as part of the awareness-raising campaign of the Black Sea Young Ambassadors.

Event News: <http://connect2blacksea.org/press-release-on-the-marine-litter-action-forum/>
Photo Contest: <http://connect2blacksea.org/photo-contest-visual-storytelling-of-the-black-sea-different-shores-different-reflections-and-one-sea-winners-announcement/>

Black Sea SRIA and Implementation Plan Consultations (6 Black Sea Countries, physical/online): With the aim of getting national-level input from a broader stakeholder group on the priorities R&I themes and concrete strategic joint (SJAs) actions drafted as an output of the 1st National SRIA Consultations, a 2nd Black Sea SRIA National Consultation series conducted. Stakeholders from six Black Sea countries held national-level meetings to define what is feasible for the Black Sea.

At consultations, a series of exercises are conducted to identify common strategic joint actions that different Black Sea countries find feasible and/or already in the progress of implementing so that synergies among the implementation of these actions can be aligned across different countries.

Based on these, 2nd consultation meetings, the “Consultation with Linked Projects and Initiatives” event took place to complement the national-level input. The results of these workshops were incorporated into the Final SRIA and its Implementation Plan.

News of 2nd SRIA National Consultations: <http://connect2blacksea.org/2nd-round-of-black-sea-strategic-research-and-innovation-agenda-national-consultation-has-started/>

News of Consultation with Linked Projects and Initiatives: <http://connect2blacksea.org/consultation-with-linked-projects-and-initiatives-on-the-implementation-plan/>



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Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan Launch Event (04 May 2023, Brussels): Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan was launched in the European Parliament, Brussels on the 4th of May, 2023. At the launch event of this guiding document, which is one of the main outputs of the project, more than 110 stakeholders from EU and Black Sea research to policymaking communities attended. The event was the platform where stakeholders made their commitment to advancing cooperation in priority R&I areas defined in IP will pave the way for a resilient and sustainable Black Sea.

The event chaired by MEP Marian-Jean MARINESCU in the framework of the SEARica Intergroup hosted many valuable speakers including Delilah Al Khudhairy – Director of the DG for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Elisabetta Balzi – Head of Unit, Healthy Seas and Ocean, DG of Research and Innovation of European Commission and Black Sea Young Ambassadors (BSYAs).

Event News: <http://connect2blacksea.org/press-release-on-the-launch-of-the-black-sea-sria-implementation-plan/>

SRIA IP: <http://connect2blacksea.org/strategic-research-and-innovation-agenda-implementation-plans-final-edition-unveiled/>

Table 2 A list of meetings that have been organized within the second half of the Black Sea CONNECT

Event	Date	Country
Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan Launch Event	04 May 2023	Brussels, BE
Consultation with Linked Projects and Initiatives	15 March 2023	Bucharest, RO
2 nd Black Sea SRIA National Consultation Meeting - Ukraine	23-21 March 2023	Online Survey
2 nd Black Sea SRIA National Consultation Meeting - Bulgaria	17 February 2023	Sofia, BG
2 nd Black Sea SRIA National Consultation Meeting - Türkiye	22.02-03.03.2023	Online Survey
2 nd Black Sea SRIA National Consultation Meeting – Romania & Moldova	08 February 2023	Constanza, RO
2 nd Black Sea SRIA National Consultation Meeting - Georgia	02 February 2023	Tbilisi, GE
Marine Litter Action Forum	14-15 November 2022	İstanbul, TR,
Innovation Workshop	02 February 2022	Online



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Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan
Launch, Brussels



Towards SRIA Implementation Plan,
Romania



Marine Litter Action Forum, Istanbul



Innovation Workshop, Online

Figure 1 Highlights from the organised events

3.1.1.2 Events, meetings where Black Sea CONNECT represented

Along with this, the CSA has been represented in various platforms such as European Maritime Day 2023, UN Ocean Decade and COP 27 (Table 3, Figure 2). Some major events in which Black Sea CONNECT is represented is provided below.

EC Horizon Europe Programme Launch Event (21-22 March 2022, Türkiye): A Horizon Europe launch event with a specific focus on increasing the participation of Turkish entities and in particular Turkish industries in the programme took place in İstanbul, Türkiye on 21-22 March 2022 gathering more than 250 high-level participants representing the Turkish research and innovation ecosystem physically and 400 virtually. At the event where Türkiye's participation in the Horizon Europe Program, a flagship research and innovation initiative of the European Union, was officially announced, **the METU Institute of Marine Sciences, as the coordinator of the Black Sea CONNECT and BRIDGE-BS projects, proudly received the prestigious award.**

Agenda: <https://ufukavrupa.org.tr/sites/default/files/inline-files/he-launch-event-draft-programme-v12-pdf.pdf>

News: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/horizon-europe-launch-event-turkey-2022-03-31_en

<https://ufukavrupa.org.tr/en/news/horizon-europe-launch-event-21-22-march-2022-istanbul>

<http://connect2blacksea.org/black-sea-connect-received-an-award-as-a-success-story/>



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UN Ocean Decade Conference 2022 (27 June – 1 July 2022, Lisbon, Portugal): At the “Building a Bridge between Science and Sustainable Action in Managing Impacts of Non-Indigenous Species in the Mediterranean Sea” side event of the UN Ocean Decade Conference 2022, Coordinator of Black Sea CONNECT was one of the moderators. In his speech on “Building a Bridge between Science and Sustainable Action in Marine Sciences,” he shared sustainable blue economy applications in the Black Sea, strategic guidance SRIA and Black Sea CONNECT.

Agenda: <https://tudav.org/en/tudav-side-event-in-ocean-conference-2022-lisbon/>

News: <http://connect2blacksea.org/5806-2/#>

Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030” Conference (13-14 June 2022, Marseille, France): At the event where the co-creation process of the Mission Charter was discussed with stakeholders and youth made their pledged on supporting the implementation of Mission Ocean, Romanian Young Ambassador Selma Menabit represented the Black Sea youth and Black Sea CONNECT, shared their experiences on how to be voice of seas and how Black Sea Youth can contribute to Mission Ocean goals.

Agenda:

https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-06/programme_mission_restore_our_ocean_and_waters_conference2022.pdf

News: https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/events/upcoming-events/how-engage-mission-restore-our-ocean-and-waters-2030-2022-06-14_en
<http://connect2blacksea.org/4632-2/>

Black Sea Blue Policy Event, Georgia (05 July 2022, Batumi, Georgia): Black Sea CONNECT partner, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, participated in the national scientific-educational event "Black Sea Blue Policy" held at Batumi Shota Rustaveli University. At the event where ongoing Black Sea and EU projects were shared, Black Sea CONNECT shared with the Georgian stakeholders. As well as oral presentations Black Sea CONNECT met with the general public including school kids at exhibition session. Black Sea Young Ambassadors conducted awareness-raising activities such as quizzes and a contest of thematic paintings related to the Black Sea for the wide range of event attendees. **The “Ocean is your part of life” event that Black Sea Young Ambassadors organised took place under EMD in my Country 2022 and won a Best Event Organiser award given by the Welcome to Georgia Award (WtGA).**

EMD Agenda: https://maritime-day.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-04/european-maritime-day-events-in-europe-2022-per-country_en_0.pdf

News: <http://connect2blacksea.org/5839-2/>

Award: https://wtgawards.com/?page_id=45582



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United Nations Climate Change Conference 2022 (COP27) (6-20 November 2022, Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt):

Black Sea CONNECT and Black Sea SRIA were presented at the side event of the 27th United Nations Climate Change conference, held in Egypt. Black Sea CONNECT coordinator Baris Salihoglu was one of the moderators of the “Climate Based Marine MSP and Management of Cooling Waters in the cooling waters in Türkiye session. As a sea basin strategy, Black Sea SRIA, its pillars and goals were shared. As well as this, Black Sea CONNECT, and its role in implementing SRIA shared with COP participants.

Agenda: <https://iklim.gov.tr/db/turkce/icerikler/files/COP27%20Side%20Events.pdf>

News: <http://connect2blacksea.org/black-sea-connect-waves-at-cop27/>

Table 3 Highlights from the events where the CSA, Black Sea SRIA and Black Sea Young Ambassadors were represented during RP2 (the list is not exhaustive)

Event	Date	Country
Black Sea CONNECT Caravan on Blue Economy, Burgas https://bsun.org/pages/black-sea-connect-project/mobile-caravan.php	12 May 2023	Burgas, Bulgaria
Regional workshop “Building Black Sea Blue Economy: Partnership and Funding opportunities” https://black-sea-maritime-agenda.ec.europa.eu/cma-hosts-its-first-regional-workshop-partnership-and-funding-opportunities	10 May 2023	Online
Science – Policy Dialogue Forum for a Sustainable Blue Economy in the Black Sea	29 March 2023	Thessaloniki, Greece
United Nations Climate Change Conference 2022 (COP27) http://connect2blacksea.org/black-sea-connect-waves-at-cop27/	12 November 2022	Sharm El-Sheikh, EG
Regional workshop “Building Black Sea Blue Economy: Partnership and Funding opportunities” http://connect2blacksea.org/black-sea-connect-joined-the-sbep-black-sea-regional-workshop/	13 October 2022	Brussels, BE
MARBLUE 2022 Blue Growth: Challenges and Opportunities for the Black Sea http://www.marblue.ro/	26-28th October 2022	Constanta, RO
ARSINOE & BRIDGE-BS Living Labs	2022-2023	Türkiye/Online
The 1st Summer School of the H2020 BRIDGE-BS	23-25 August 2023	Istanbul, Türkiye
UN Ocean Decade Conference 2022 http://connect2blacksea.org/5806-2/#	28 June 2022	Lisbon, PT
Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030” Conference http://connect2blacksea.org/4632-2/	14-15 June 2022	Marseille, FR
LitOUTer 4th Regional workshop http://connect2blacksea.org/the-4th-regional-workshop-on-marine-litter-was-organized-by-black-sea-connect-partner-nimrd/	14-15 April 2022	Constanta, RO
EC Horizon Europe Programme Launch Event http://connect2blacksea.org/black-sea-connect-received-an-award-as-a-success-story/	21-22 March 2022	İstanbul, TR
CulTourE4Youth Supporting Youth Entrepreneurship in Cultural Tourism for coastal communities Workshops http://connect2blacksea.org/cultoure4youth-project-supporting-youth-entrepreneurship-in-cultural-tourism-for-coastal-communities/ http://connect2blacksea.org/cultoure4youth-project-hosted-two-additional-workshops/	2021-2022	Mersin, TR / Batumi, GE / Athens, GR



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Common Maritime Agenda http://connect2blacksea.org/cma-ministerial-meeting/	14 December 2021	Online
Kick of BRIDGE-BS Project: Joint Section for BRIDGE-BS, DOORS and Black Sea CONNECT http://connect2blacksea.org/press-release-bridge-bs-kick-off/	12-13 July 2021	Online
The Blue Growth Hackathon http://connect2blacksea.org/the-blue-growth-hackathon/	29-30 June 2021	Hârşova, Romania
Black Sea CONNECT Caravan on Blue Economy http://connect2blacksea.org/caravan-education-for-blue-growth/	11 June 2021	Saint George Village, Romania,



Mission “Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030” Conference, France



UN Ocean Decade Conference 2022, Portugal



United Nations Climate Change Conference 2022 (COP27), Egypt



CulTourE4Youth Project Workshop, Georgia (hybrid)

Figure 2 Highlights from the events where Black Sea CONNECT presented

3.1.1.2 Setting up Booths

Booths were used to increase the visibility of Black Sea CONNECT, Black Sea SRIA, and its implementation plan, as well as oral presentations. In major global and EU-level events such as EU Maritime Day 2023, besides that at national events, Black Sea CONNECT activities and outcomes were shared with different stakeholders.

EU Maritime Day 2023 (24-25 May 2023, Brest, France): The European Maritime Day (EMD) is the annual two-day event during which Europe’s maritime community meets to network, discuss and outline joint action on maritime affairs and sustainable blue economy. Black Sea CONNECT and SRIA implementing BRIDGE-BS and DOORS projects represented



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at EU Maritime Day. In this event where different stakeholders from marine and maritime fields came together, Black Sea CONNECT made a significant impact. From academia to business a lot of visitors were interested in not only project goals and outcomes but also SRIA and Implementation Plan development processes, Black Sea Young Ambassadors programme and more. As the Black Sea CONNECT coordination team, we had a chance to share what we are doing for the sustainable Blue Economy in the Black Sea with impactful policymakers such as Hervé Berville, a French economist and politician and Charlina Vitcheva, Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. The event was an excellent opportunity to make a network and plant the seeds of future collaborations on the blue economy.

Exhibitors List: <https://european-maritime-day-2023.b2match.io/components/28111>

News: <http://connect2blacksea.org/black-sea-connect-makes-waves-at-european-maritime-day-2023/>

BRIDGE-BS High-Tech Summit (27-28 September 2022, Varna, Bulgaria): Under the EU H2020 funded BRIDGES-BS, the Blue Economy High-Tech for the Black Sea on ocean digitalization and Industry 4.0 was held. The event aimed to provide a meeting point for industry and research to generate and incubate ideas for future blue economy innovative services, potentially across the various relevant economic activities for the Black Sea. Black Sea CONNECT and Black Sea SRIA were highlighted at various times during the event. Participants had a chance to have detailed information on the Black Sea CONNECT project, SRIA and how the project and this guidance document support marine and maritime technology at exhibitions.

Event: <https://bridgeblacksea.org/index.php/2022/06/01/save-the-date-for-the-high-tech-summit-for-the-black-sea/>

News: <http://connect2blacksea.org/black-sea-connect-shines-at-blue-economy-high-tech-summit-for-the-black-sea-organized-under-bridge-bs/>

EU Maritime Day in my Country, Romania (09 May 2022, Constanta, Romania): A series of events held by Black Sea CONNECT partners under EMD in my country's programme. At the event held by BSUN, where promoting the "Blue Economy in the Black Sea and Danube" region aimed, Black Sea CONNECT and SRIA implementing projects BRIDGE-BS and DOORS projects reached a broader scientific and non-scientific stakeholder.

Agenda: https://maritime-day.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-04/european-maritime-day-events-in-europe-2022-per-country_en_0.pdf

<https://bsun.org/pages/science-fair-on-blue-economy-2022.php>

Sailing to the Future: Black Sea CONNECT was represented by partner organisation NIMRD at the 2nd Sailing to the Future event, an exhibition of equipment and teaching equipment for naval education. The event was organised by "Mircea cel Batran" Naval Academy, Constanta.



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The event was organised linked to the 8th International Scientific Conference "SEA-CONF 2022" which aims to bring stakeholders from the marine industry, research and education and to provide an opportunity for relationships for academics, professionals and public authorities active in this domain together.



European Maritime Day 2023, France



BRIDGE-BS High-Tech Summit, Bulgaria



Black Sea Blue Policy Event, Georgia



EMD in my Country, Romania



Sailing to Future, Romania

Figure 3 Highlight the Booths at different events

3.1.2. Project Promotional and Event Videos

Videos play a crucial role in enhancing visibility and dissemination with engaging content, visual appeal, measurable impact and more. Hence, under Black Sea CONNECT, not only epic and introductory promotional videos but also diverse array of event films were created (Table 4). Epic video and motion graphic film can be easily found on the project website (<http://connect2blacksea.org/unveiling-two-captivating-black-sea-connect-videos/#>), and all the videos created so



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far are available on the YouTube page (<https://www.youtube.com/@connectblacksea9028>). Moreover, online international event recordings can be reached via YouTube.

Through an epic video named “[The Call of the Black Sea](#),” the emotional connection would like to be created between our unique sea basin and societies as well as emphasising the importance sustainable blue economy for the future of the Black Sea. And the Blue Economy in the Black Sea has been a long journey that should be translated to the non-academic public. Therefore, a motion graphic video named “[Black Sea CONNECT and Black Sea SRIA IP](#)” were created including milestones and major actors who took part in this journey to better explain what has been done for the healthy and resilient Black Sea (Figure 4).

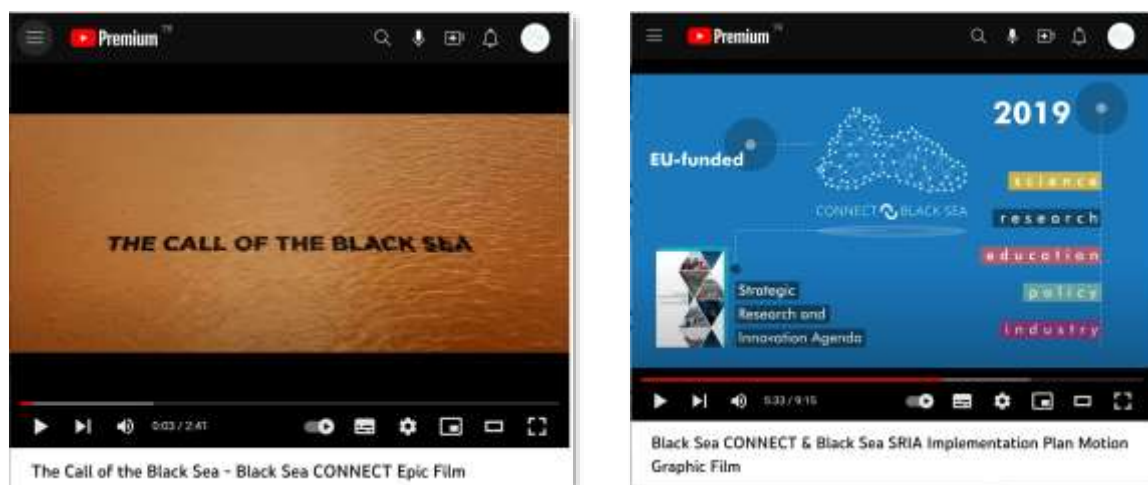


Figure 4 Epic and Motion Graphic videos of the Black Sea CONNECT

Table 4 Promotional and Event videos created under the Black Sea CONNECT

Video	Link
The Call of the Black Sea - Epic Video	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cG_M2dWkLqo
Black Sea CONNECT and SRIA Implementation Plan Introductory Motion Graphic Video	https://youtu.be/V1EbM5YPcBQ
Launch of the Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan - Event Movie	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7aqIAzkF7g
Consultation with Linked Projects and Initiatives on the Implementation Plan - Event Movie	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVgPSee7xaE
Black Sea CONNECT Marine Litter Action Forum - Event Movie	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zfdn0w_xZVs
Black Sea Young Ambassadors Summer Training – Event Movie	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4eLpJ7wBnGI
Black Sea Young Ambassadors UN Ocean Decade ECOP Video	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvXcoZ8ZL04

3.1.3. Newsletter

During the second half of the Black Sea CONNECT CSA, two electronic newsletters were distributed to promote project activities, outcomes and blue economy-related updates. As well



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as this, newsletters were utilized to communicate forthcoming events, extending invitations for participation (Invitation to SRIA IP Launch Event, MLAF and so on). Beyond being shared directly with subscribers, these newsletters are further disseminated on social media channels. All issues can be reached on the [website](#).

The number of newsletter subscribers reaches 667 people. While the 3rd newsletter was delivered to 339 subscribers (Dec 2021), the final issue was shared with 687 people (Aug 2023). Compared to the first issue the number of recipients increased six-fold.



Figure 5 Content of the last issue of the Black Sea CONNECT Newsletter (prominent events, young ambassadors, reading suggestions, latest videos/photos from CSA (<https://us20.campaign-archive.com/?u=69d8b1a4ea2f0628e8ffe1ac3&id=1f1f904368>))

3.1.4. Project Website

The Black Sea CONNECT website (connect2blacksea.org) serves as a virtual platform designed to effectively communicate and promote the overall Black Sea CONNECT and Blue Economy in the Black Sea, as well as reaching out to the general public and specific stakeholders at the same time. METU Coordination Team maintains the website, which was launched in early December 2019. It has been consistently updated and enriched with new content regularly since its inception.

The website clearly and structurally presents the key aspects of the project (e.g., objectives, timeframe, etc.). The Black Sea CONNECT website is not intended to be a conventional 'project' website; rather, the website's primary function is to bring the Black Sea SRIA and its Implementation Plan to the forefront (Figure 7).

The website serves as a multifaceted platform for:

- Promoting the project, its activities, events, and outcomes



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- Providing a space for project partners and stakeholders interested in the project and blue economy in the Black Sea
- Raising awareness of the Black Sea in general and relevant project activities and results,
- Informing the community about the Black Sea Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA), linked projects, entities, and infrastructures,
- Providing the visitors with the most recent blue economy-related news, events, and opportunities, ensuring they remain up-to-date with developments.
- Sharing all communication materials of CSA



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Page	Page Views	% Page View
1. /	13,975	25.58%
2. /the-sria/	2,759	5.05%
3. /outreach/youth-ambassadors/	2,222	4.07%
4. /about-the-initiative/	2,111	3.86%
5. /news/	2,032	3.72%
6. /marine-litter-action-forum/	1,859	3.40%
7. /events/	1,843	3.37%
8. /about-the-csa/	1,560	2.86%
9. /outreach/	1,182	2.16%
10. /black-sea-projects/	1,135	2.08%

Country	Users	% Users
1. Türkiye	1,985	15.07%
2. Romania	1,612	12.24%
3. United States	1,364	10.36%
4. Bulgaria	783	5.95%
5. Belgium	528	4.01%
6. Georgia	526	3.99%
7. Ukraine	506	3.84%
8. Greece	503	3.82%
9. France	435	3.30%
10. United Kingdom	344	2.61%

Figure 6 Google Statistics (page views, most visited pages, and top visiting countries) between Nov 2019 and June 2023 (Google Analytics, June 2023)

As the Black Sea CONNECT website was designed to serve as a one-stop-shop for news and events of the Black Sea CONNECT CSA, Black Sea SRIA, linked projects, entities, and infrastructures; hence it attracts a large number of visitors. The volume of page visits has undergone a remarkable threefold increase compared to the previous reporting period (17,9 for

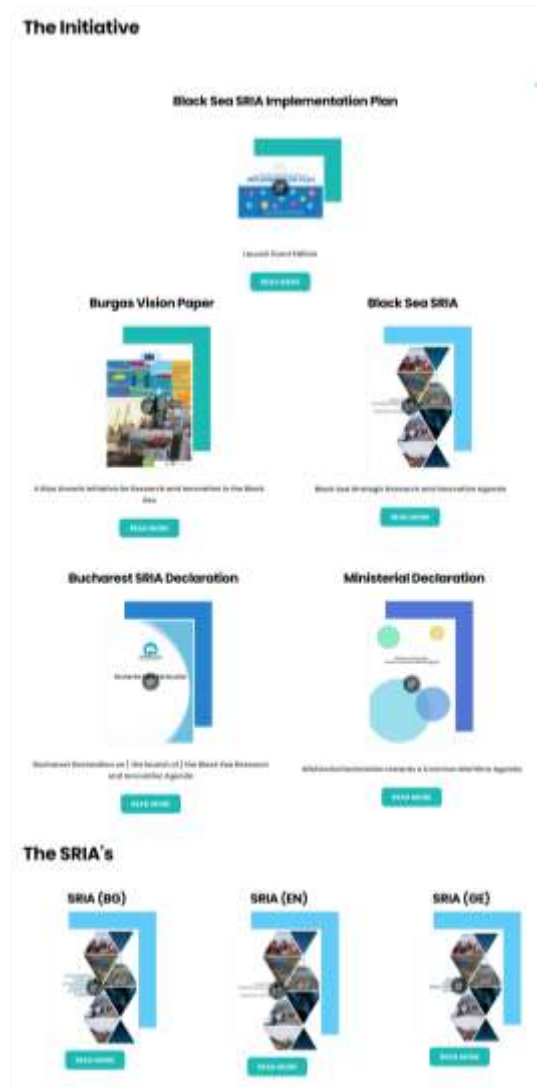


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Nov 2019-March 2021 period). With an impressive tally of 54.6 K visits, the website's performance stands as a testament to its resonance within the context of H2020 CSA projects. Following the main page, The SRIA, About Us – The Initiative, and Outreach -Young Ambassadors are the top three visited pages. According to the analytics, the website traffic is primarily driven by viewers from Türkiye, Romania, and US, underscoring the global relevance and appeal of the content presented on the platform.

Website Metrics: Nov 2019 - June 2023

Number of Website Views	54.6 K
Number of Users	13.1 K



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Figure 7 Different pages of Website: One Stop Shop - Black Sea Projects, Publications - Initiative, News & Events, Outreach - Ocean Literacy and Education, (Connect Black Sea, 2023)

3.1.5. Social Media (SoMe)

Black Sea CONNECT has strategically amplified its online presence on prominent social media platforms (with a focus on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube). The online project visibility is further fortified through the collaborative involvement of both partner organisations and the Black Sea Young Ambassadors' accounts (Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook). BSYA SoMe metrics are given on D4.5 in detail.

The management of these diverse social media accounts has been meticulously tailored to align with the unique characteristics of each platform and the corresponding user demographics they attract. The strategy for managing Black Sea CONNECT's social media accounts, for instance, involves a comprehensive approach focused on the project's goals and activities. The emphasis is on maintaining a professional tone while highlighting the project's impact and engagement with partner organizations.

On the other hand, the strategy for the Black Sea Young Ambassadors' social media accounts is designed to reflect their dynamic and youthful perspective. The content is crafted to resonate with younger audiences, blending project-related content with authentic stories, thereby creating a more relatable and engaging connection with followers. This tailored approach ensures maximum resonance and impact.

Beyond mere project updates and achievements, the utilization of social media has been extended to disseminate broader knowledge about the blue economy and pertinent information related to the Black Sea region. This two-pronged strategy not only fosters awareness about the project's activities but also positions the initiative as an invaluable source of insights and information in the domain of blue economy and its connection to the Black Sea region.



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Table 5 Social Media Channels of Black Sea CONNECT

Channel	Name	
 Twitter	@ConnectBlackSea	https://twitter.com/ConnectBlackSea
 Facebook	@Connect2BlackSea	www.facebook.com/connect2blacksea
 YouTube	Connect Black Sea	www.youtube.com/@connectblacksea9028/featured

3.1.5.1 Twitter (The new X)

Twitter is one of the most widely used and effective social media platforms, especially among scientific communities and policymakers. Twitter allows to reach the largest number of European projects, organizations, and institutional bodies. Therefore, to be able to better engage with a target audience of the CSA through Twitter, catchy phrases, trending hashtags, and the like are used regularly. All types of activities, project outputs, and informative visuals (videos, fact sheets, etc.) are shared to better engage users and increase the visibility of CSA as well as raise awareness for our basin (Few Tweet examples; Figure 8).

The number of followers reached over 700. Over 900 tweets send by CSA and took more than 5.4 K impressions in the last 3 months (Table 6).

Table 6 Black Sea CONNECT Twitter Metrics (Twitter Analytics, 2023)

Twitter Metrics: November 2019 - June 2023	
Number of Followers	710
Following	349
Number of Tweets in total	915
Tweets by Black Sea CONNECT	555
Retweets by Black Sea CONNECT	360
Total number of Mentions	54
Total number of Tweets Views in the last 91 days	32.3K
Engagement rate in the last 91 days	5.4K



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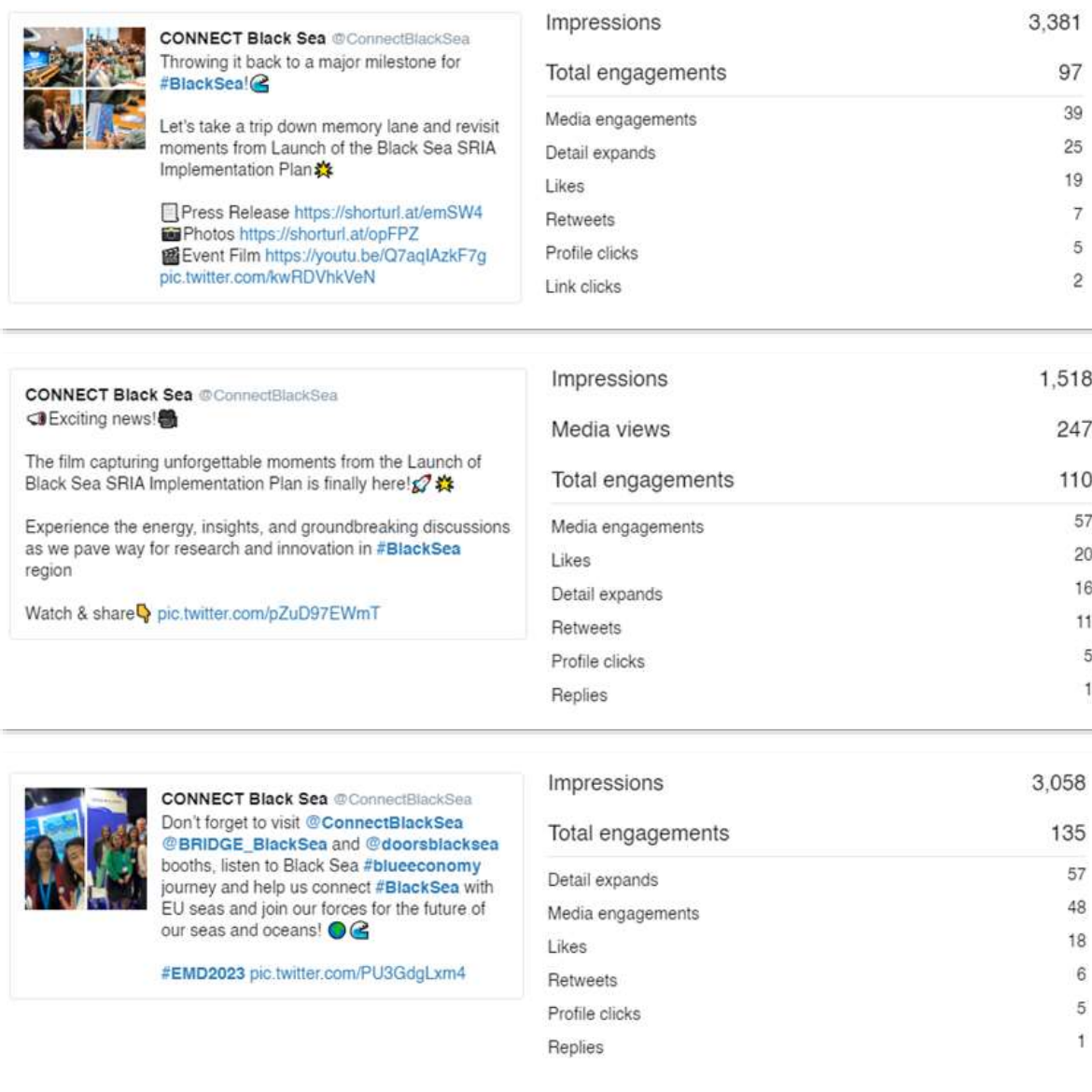


Figure 8 Examples of Twitter posts (T: SRIA IP Launch Event, M: Epic Video of CONNECT, B: EMD 2023) that have good impressions (Twitter Analytics, 2023)

3.1.5.2 Facebook

Facebook serves as an exceptionally effective medium for facilitating more comprehensive information exchange and conveying long textual bodies. Facebook has an important role in the visibility activities of Black Sea CONNECT since the tool helps us reach diverse target demographics, particularly emphasizing the older population and the general public at large. In the Black Sea countries, it can be said that Facebook surpasses other communication platforms, including Twitter, in terms of user engagement and range of facilities in the interconnection of users. Therefore, the content we share there holds profound significance. Facebook posts progress in parallel with Twitter in a richer way in terms of content by overcoming character and visual limitations. All types of activities, project outputs, and informative visuals (videos,



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fact sheets, etc.) are shared to better engage users and increase the visibility of CSA as well as raise awareness for our basin (Few Facebook post examples; Figure 9).

The number of followers reached out 848. Over 750 posts were shared by CSA and took 5.9 K impressions in the last 3 months (Table 7).

Table 7 Black Sea CONNECT Facebook Metrics (Facebook Insights, 2023)

Facebook Metrics: November 2019 - June 2023	
Number of Followers	848
Number of Page Likes	719
Number of Posts in total	750
Total number of Posts Reach in the last 90 days	5.9K
Engagement rate in the last 90 days	1.2K

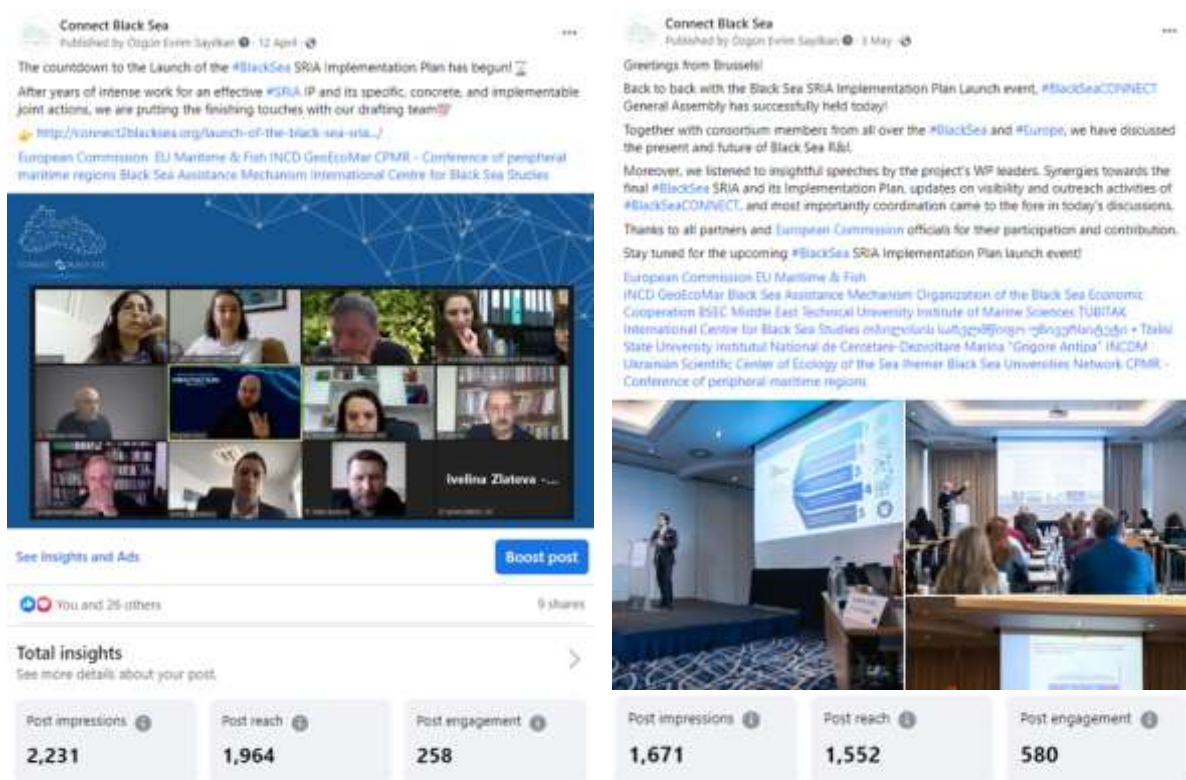


Figure 9 Examples of Facebook posts (L: SRIA IP writing group meeting, R: General Assembly Meeting) that have good impressions (Facebook Analytics, 2023)



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3.1.5.3 YouTube

All project promotional and event videos mentioned in session 3.1.2 are shared and archived on CSA's YouTube channel. Additionally, online recordings of international meetings/webinars, such as Black Sea Young Ambassadors Launch: Research and Innovation Days with former Commissioner Mariya Gabriel, Black Sea Innovation Workshop, Launch of the Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan chaired by MEP Marian-Jean MARINESCU, and more shared on YouTube. All videos and recordings are further featured across other social media platforms and young ambassadors' accounts as well (Figure 10). YouTube metrics are given below (Table 8).

Table 8 Black Sea CONNECT YouTube Metrics (YouTube Analytics, 2023)

YouTube Metrics: November 2019 - June 2023	
Number of Subscribers	33
Number of Videos in total	20
Number of Likes in total	40
Number of Views in total	1270



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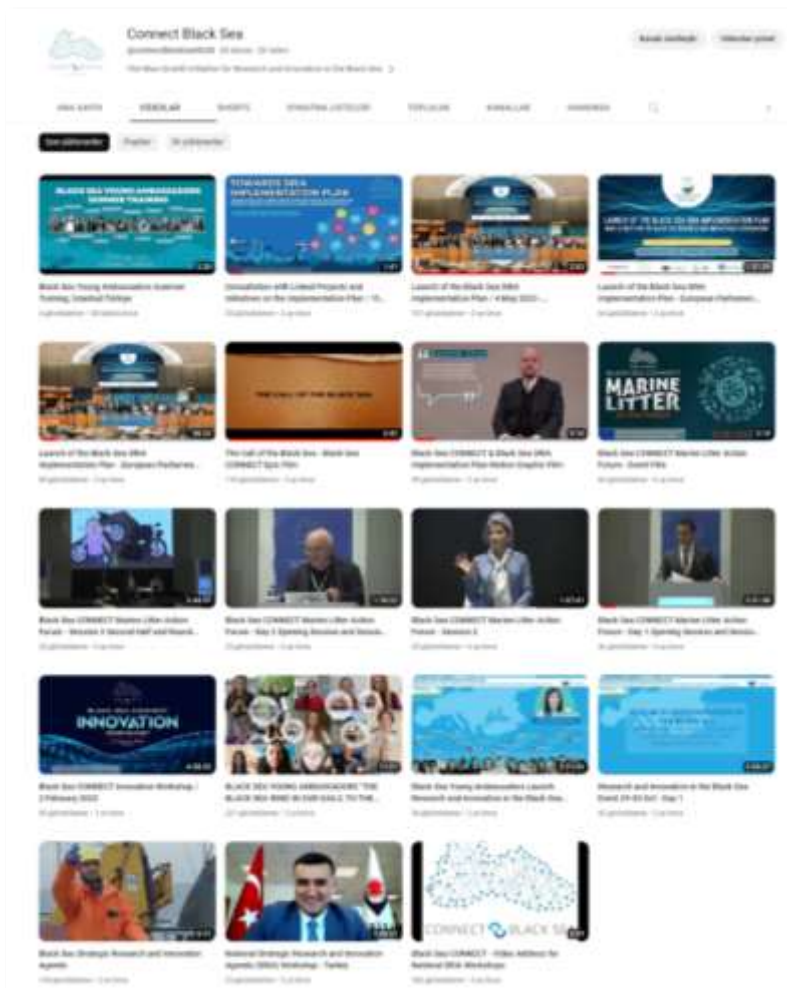


Figure 10 Video examples by YouTube (YouTube, 2023)

3.1.6. Mass Media, Press Releases and Publications

To extend its reach a broader audience and increase the visibility of Black Sea CONNECT at local, national, and regional levels, the project has utilized mass media in addition to social media. Moreover, right after the activities concluded as part of the CSA, press releases detailing the event is promptly published on the Black Sea CONNECT website. Partners and affiliated organizations regularly incorporate these press releases into their own channels, effectively spreading the news about the event to a broader range of audiences. Noteworthy instances of these CSA's mass media coverage, encompassing appearances in TV shows, popular science journals, radio, and similar platforms are given below (Table 9, Figure 11).

Table 9 Black Sea CONNECT Presence on Mass Media / Press Releases / Publications

Title	Name of the Media	Type	Link
Scientists produce solutions for the sustainable health of the Black Sea	Anadolu Ajansı	State-run News Agency	https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/yesilhat/bilim/karadenizin-surdurulebilir-sagligi-icin-bilim-insanlari-cozum-uretiyor/1820938



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Black Sea CONNECT in Bucharest	Radio Romania Cultural	Radio Program	https://www.radioromaniacultural.ro/sectiuni-articole/stiinta/stiinta-360-16-martie-2023-black-sea-connect-la-bucuresti-id36798.html?fbclid=IwAR1MMNdVSiKbb0d9N_dlQRwjXxa0Jxiv4FlhG8j1y1rk1Z8MEigBGZNXIs
Black Sea: Connecting Continents and Civilizations	National Geographic Romania	Popular Science Magazine	https://www.natgeo.ro/articole/romania/explorari-ro/38336-marea-neagra-conectand-continente-si-civilizatii
"Blue Growth" initiative at the Black Sea	Blue Dobrogea TV	TV Show	https://www.dobrogea.tv/stire/cat/21646/dobrogea-albastra-06-iunie-2021.html https://www.facebook.com/DobrogeaTV/videos/388700835788237
METU's Projects are Attracting International Attention	Turkish Time R&D 250	Journal	https://turkishtimedergi.com/ar-ge-250/
Marine Science Communication in Europe	European Marine Board Science Brief	Publication	http://connect2blacksea.org/the-future-science-brief-marine-science-communication-in-europe-a-way-forward-has-been-launched/
Restore Our Ocean and Waters: A Synergy Info Pack" by CORDIS	Community Research and Development Information Service	Publication	https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/015fe65b-8d8d-11ec-8c40-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-251075209
Black Sea Countries come together for Blue Growth: H2020 Black Sea CONNECT	ODTULU	Journal	https://odtulu.metu.edu.tr/dergiler/66
Mersin's Coastal City Identity will be Strengthened	CUKUROVA	Newspaper	https://web.interpress.com/app/document/viewer/81004c8e-2164-4baf-8871-83f173b26867?cid=ZpNbwJBusDE%3D
METU ranks first in Horizon Europe's List of Most Successful Turkish Research Institutions	METU @Media	Digital News Platform	https://basinda.metu.edu.tr/icerik/odtuden/244
The second national consultation "Blue Growth Initiative for Scientific Research and Innovation in the Black Sea" will take place at the BAS	Bulgarian News Agency	News Agency	https://www.bta.bg/bg/news/404975-vtoranatsionalna-sreshta-initsiativa-za-sin-rastezh-za-nauchni-izsledvaniya-i-
A Summer Training on Science Communication for the Black Sea Young Ambassadors	BSEC	Press Release	chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpajpcgplefindmkaj/http://core.bsec-organization.org/UploadedFiles/PressReleases/20230612-13-summer-training-on-science-communication-for-the-black-sea-young-ambassadors-slgpxkkk.pdf
Challenges for a Healthy Marine Ecosystem	Romanian Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitization Newsletter	Press Release	https://www.research.gov.ro/newsletter-no-62-10365/



<p>Black Sea CONNECT General Assembly and the Launch of the Black Sea Strategic Research and Innovation</p>	<p>BSEC Newsletter</p>	<p>Press Release</p>	<p>chrome- extension://efaidnbmnnnibpajpcglclefindmk aj/http://core.bsec- organization.org/UploadedFiles/PressRelease s/20230503-04-black-sea-connect-general- assembly-and-launch-of-sria-k123tduw.pdf</p>
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Black Sea: connecting continents and civilizations

May 17, 2021 • Elena Draghici • Explorations in Romania

Photo: GEDECOMAR

How can we come to understand what are the processes that are going on in the Black Sea.

Prof. Adrian Stanica, INCD GeoEcoMar
Photo: GEDECOMAR

It unites Europe with Asia. It is the bridge between the East and the West, a maritime basin with very complicated composition and evolution. It has unique characteristics at the level of the Planetary Ocean: it is under the influence of large hydrographic systems, much more extensive than the sea itself. Its average salinity is half that of the Planetary Ocean. And most of it, from less than 200 meters of surface to its abyssal part, at more than 2,200 meters deep, it lacks oxygen.

The lack of oxygen in most of the basin is caused by its evolution during recent geological time. And this characteristic, of the oxygen-deprived marine environment, helps us understand how the great oil and gas deposits have formed in the history of our planet. It is home to rare species, some of which have lasted hundreds of millions of years, many of which are now endangered. It has facilitated the development of human civilization on its shores since its inception.

However, it remains a great little study and the hardest thing is to find the answer to the question: "How can we come to understand what are the processes that are going on in the Black Sea?"

Photo: GEDECOMAR

Pe lângă de la premisa că amenzile comuniste în prezent mult mai bine a grafiata planetei. Mărește și este adăugate dintr-unul Planeta, eforturile de studiere a mediului marin reprezintă un altul exemplu, de care trebuie să fi depășiți conștient și specialiști din toate domeniile științifice. Mai mult, mare este a noastră, a tuturor, de aceea cercetările marine trebuie să aducă împreună experți din țări diferite, cu experiențe în domenii diferite.

Un succesul pentru Proiectarea detaliată a Mării Negre și a proceselor care o controlează, poate veni doar prin interdisciplinaritate și lucrul în comun al cercetătorilor din regiune, dar și al persoanelor experimentate din alte bazine maritime. Acest aproape un deceniu, mai mult specialiști din statele membre Mării Negre, cu sprijinul Comisiei Europene (Directoratul general pentru cercetare inovare și politici afaceri marine), au început să lucreze la să pună la punct o Agendă Strategică pentru Cercetare Inovare la Marea Neagră.

Photo: GEDECOMAR

Scopul acestui document este studierea sistematică a caracteristicilor și proceselor hidrografice mari, găsite de obicei prin care Marea Neagră să devină o mare sănătoasă și productivă la începutul anului 2022, reducerea consumurilor de gaze (gămurile Mării Negre pentru a proteja și promova resursele marine. Documentul mai urmărește și să evidențieze punerea la punct a unui sistem de supraveghere complex, care să ne informeze permanent despre posibilitățile științifice de studiu ecologic și să ne pună în evidență în mod eficient. Cum rezultatele cercetării științifice trebuie puse în slujba societății, Agenda Strategică urmărește și să promoveze dezvoltarea de noi afaceri inovative, care să aducă osea de apărea rezultate științifice în slujba economiei noastre.

Un succes Document, Agenda Strategică de Cercetare Inovare la Marea Neagră, care a fost lansat la București în timpul Președinției României UE a României, în mai 2019, este în prezent revizuit și adaptat la necesitățile tehnice și științifice ale Mării Negre, prin proiectul Black Sea CONNECT finanțat de către Comisia Europeană prin Programul Cadru Orizont 2020 (Directoratul General Cercetare Inovare) și coordonat de METU (Turcia). Prin acest proiect, este mai importante inițiative ale cercetării marine din Europa și din alte zone ale lumii sunt deschise comunicării științifice din zona Mării Negre, iar exemplarele din bazine practice existente deja în regiune sunt prezentate colecții din altele zone din lume. Prin Black Sea CONNECT, un rol important este acordat tuturor generațiilor de specialiști în domeniul științific, dar și comunității științifice, care trebuie să fie mai bine informate cu privire la problemele și oportunitățile din Marea Neagră. De aceea, mai mult decât din fiecare dintre etapele noastre au fost selectate opere a fi abordată să devină administrat „Amfiteatrul al Mării Negre”, stabilește rezultate din acest proiect să fie continuat în alte două proiecte majore, finanțate tot de către Comisia Europeană: DOORS și BRIDGE. În toate aceste proiecte amândouă se vor desfășura activități naționale de profil din România, Georgia și instituții din Cercetare Marine „Orizont Antep” (R).



The activities of the Black Sea CONNECT Coordination and Support Action are funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 860055.

3.1.7. Communication Toolkit

For enhancing both the Black Sea CONNECT's visibility and impact, as well as conducting effective communication with stakeholders, a toolkit including brochures, roll-ups, online meeting backgrounds, document templates, and promotional materials has been designed. These concerted efforts have been made to ensure the alignment with the project partners. As well as general project promotions and visibility, event-based materials have been designed (for Marine Litter Action Forum, plastic-free reusable materials for SRIA IP, Launch Bookmark with flower seed symbolising seed of cooperation and event invitation/document promotion brochures as for SRIA IP). All those materials are efficiently used for events, social and mass media presence, and reaching the general public. Moreover, several posters were meticulously designed for the Black Sea Young Ambassadors program and the project's focal events, including the Marine Litter Action Forum, Innovation Workshop, and National Consultations. These specialized posters were prominently featured during the events (such as the Launch of the SRIA IP and European Maritime Day 2023), effectively facilitating the project's visual communication to a wide-ranging audience.

All communication-related designs are open source and can be reached on the project website <http://connect2blacksea.org/outreach/#communicationtoolkit>



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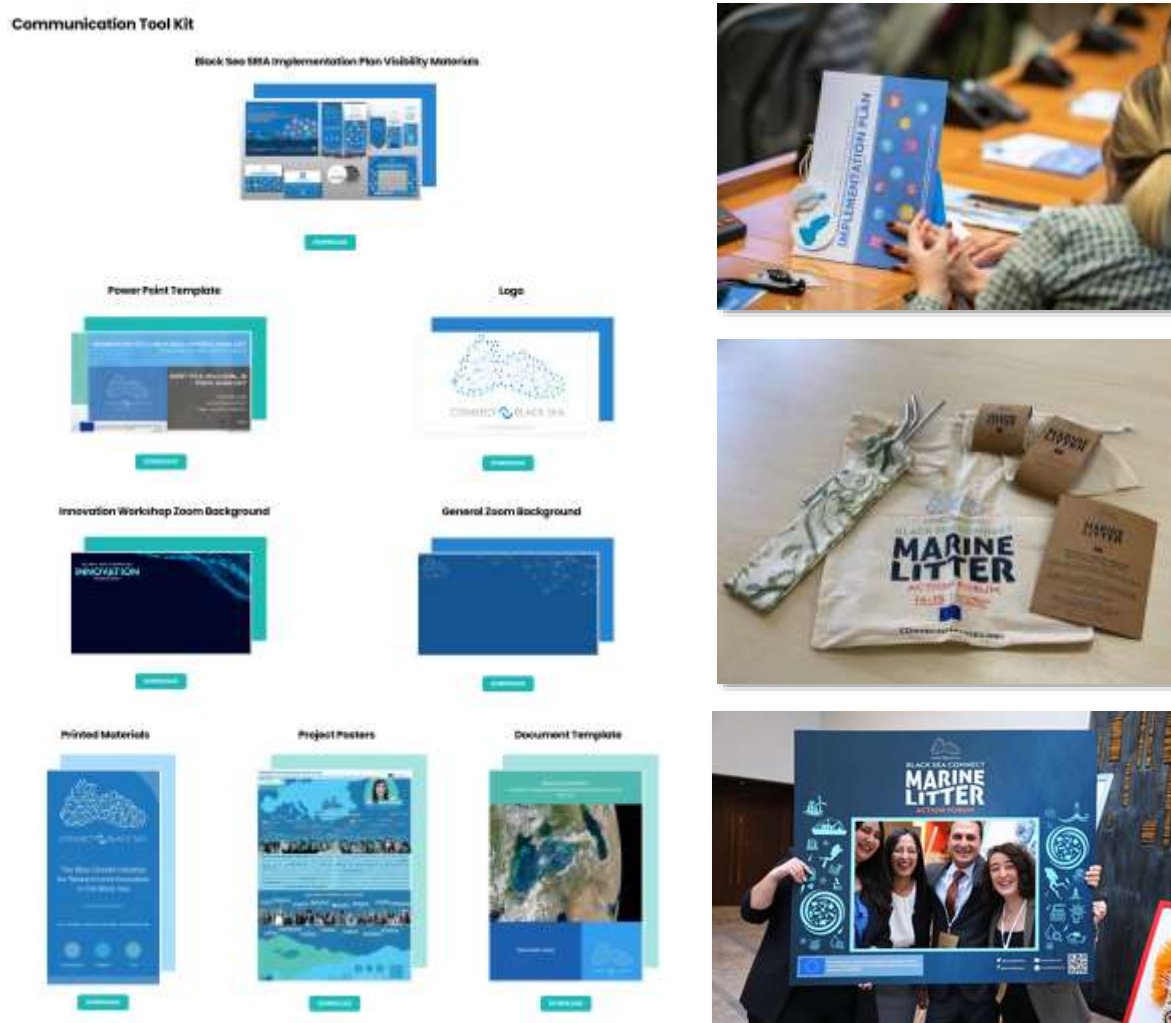


Figure 12 Communication Toolkit and Promotional Material Examples of Black Sea CONNECT

3.2. Black Sea Awareness & Outreach (T4.2, Lead BSUN)

Awareness raising and outreach activities have great importance for creating Black Sea literate societies, bridging the gap between science and Black Sea societies, as well as increasing the public's understanding of science and how it affects the environment and their lives. Hence under Black Sea CONNECT CSA, different platforms were created (such as an observatory on the blue economy, and gaming) and various target-oriented events/activities were conducted (such as mobile caravan, art contests, and educational outreach activities). As well as task lead partner Black Sea Universities Network, all partners and Black Sea Young Ambassadors contributed to this task. The activities of BSYAs are shared in detail in Deliverable 4.5.

3.2.1. Outreach and Educational Activities

Across various cities in 4 the Black Sea countries, to draw attention to Black Sea stressors, and raising awareness about the importance of clean, healthy, and sustainable waters as well as the Blue economy, series of activities were conducted for the general public from all ages.



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“Sea and Climate” Literacy and Outreach Programme (March-June 2023): Black Sea CONNECT coordinator METU IMS has undertaken a literacy and outreach programme named “Sea and Climate” in Türkiye (Figure 13). Under this programme, different theoretical and hands-on activities have been conducted with primary and secondary school students to increase awareness of seas, climate change, and its impacts on seas. Training and interactive activities are organized to emphasize the importance of the seas in human life, the factors that cause climate change, the direct effect of this change on the seas, and how people will be affected by all these. Within the program, it has reached many different groups including disadvantaged kids, Erasmus + or Science and Art Education Centers’ students. Since March 2023, the programme hosted more than 300 kids.



Figure 13 Sea and Climate, Türkiye, March-June 2023

Open Day at NIMRD “Grigore Antipa” under EMD in My Country (06 April 2023, Romania): Black Sea CONNECT partner NIMRD, opened its doors to allow visitors to participate in the Marine Research Open Day event, as a part of European Maritime Day in My Country 2023. The activity was coordinated by [Dr. Nicoleta Damir](#) and supported by her fellow ambassador [Elena Bisinicu](#) under the Black Sea Young Ambassadors Programme. The event programme consisted of:

- Laboratory experiments
- Visualization of phytoplankton and zooplankton species under the inverted microscope
- Visiting the aquaculture laboratory, the institute's ichthyologic collection
- Presentation of oceanographic equipment/application



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Figure 14 Open Day at NIMRD, Romania, April 2023

News: <http://connect2blacksea.org/black-sea-connect-partner-nimrd-grigore-antipa-opens-its-doors-for-engaging-marine-research-open-day-during-european-maritime-day/>

Science at NIMRD under Green Week (28 March 2023, Romania): As part of the educational program “Green Week”, Black Sea CONNECT partner NIMRD Grigore Antipa, carried out outreach activity together with the students of “Tudor Arghezi” Năvodari Gymnasium School. The event programme consisted of:

- laboratory experiments;
- presenting the work equipment used within the Department of Oceanography and Coastal Engineering.

The activity was organised with the aim of increasing awareness of the influence of stressors on the Black Sea marine ecosystem by Romanian Black Sea Young Ambassadors Dr. Nicoleta Damir and Dr. Elena Bişinicu.



Figure 15 Science at NIMRD under Green Week, March 2023, Romania

News: <http://connect2blacksea.org/black-sea-connect-partner-nimrd-grigore-antipa-collaborates-with-local-school-for-science-outreach-during-green-week/>



The activities of the Black Sea CONNECT Coordination and Support Action are funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 860055.

SciLabs in Kindergartens: Under the cooperation between BSUN & Constanța County School Inspectorate for supporting education in the pre-university sector on the following topics: STEM, blue economy, and interethnic cultural exchange a series of activities such as workshops and outreach events for kindergarten students were organized. Moreover, in order to assess the situation in schools, workshops with teachers on the three themes, courses, seminars, and a series of pilot projects were carried out.

- a. Workshops: Under the umbrella of this cooperation on November 23rd, 2022, the workshop on «Promoting the Concept of Blue Growth in Early Education» was organized. At this event, professors such as Dan Shechtman and Enrico Sciubba from the University of Rome presented the motivation and ways of organising science education to the educators from the Constanța County School Inspectorate network in the preschool system.
- b. Outreach Activities: Concurrent SciLabs in Kindergartens event organised in Constanta and Haifa on March 3rd, 2023. There were video and audio connections in order to be followed for the interaction of the participants. **Constanta:** Kindergarten no. 58 from Constanta organized an open lesson, that was held by a team from “Grigore Antipa” Museum of Bucharest, for the kindergarten teachers from Constanța County. **Haifa:** At a kindergarten selected by the City Hall, an open lesson was organized in a specially dedicated laboratory for kindergarten children (Figure 16).



Figure 16 SciLabs in Kindergartens, Romania / Haifa (2022-2023)

News: <http://connect2blacksea.org/boosting-early-education-with-scilabs-in-kindergartens/>



The activities of the Black Sea CONNECT Coordination and Support Action are funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 860055.

Clean Danube Clean Black Sea: Within the Erasmus+ project "Clean Danube, Clean Black Sea", with the support of the Black Sea CONNECT project, the event was organized by NIMRD and "Ioan N. Roman" High School Constanta on May 18, 2022.

The main objective was to raise awareness of the importance of environmental protection and to draw attention to the pollution of the Danube and the Black Sea. 30 students and 14 teachers from 4 participating countries named Türkiye, Austria, Hungary, and Serbia attended this awareness raising and capacity building event (Figure 17).



Figure 17 Clean Danube Clean Black Sea, Romania (May 2022)

Event: <http://connect2blacksea.org/clean-danube-clean-black-sea-by-black-sea-connect-partner-nimrd/>

3.2.2. Mobile Caravan

Through the Mobile Caravan ocean literacy events, it is aimed to increase awareness of marine ecosystems, their biodiversity, and stressors on them in different regions of the Black Sea remotely. A series of Mobile Caravan events (Table 10, Figure 18) conducted by Task 4.2 led partner BSUN to share their experiences and duplicate this activity in different Black Sea cities and countries.

Table 10 Mobile Caravan Ocean Literacy Activities

Name of the activity	Organisers	How many students/people reached	Place / Time	Link
Black Sea CONNECT Caravan on Blue Economy	BSUN	50	Saint George Village, Romania, 11 June 2021	https://bsun.org/pages/black-sea-connect-project/mobile-caravan.php
Black Sea CONNECT Caravan on	BSUN, University of Sofia - Bulgaria	50	Burgas, Bulgaria, 12 May 2023	https://bsun.org/pages/black-sea-connect-project/mobile-caravan.php



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Blue Economy, Burgas				
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News: <http://connect2blacksea.org/caravan-education-for-blue-growth/>

1st Black Sea CONNECT Caravan on Blue Economy (11 June 2021, Covasna, Romania):

To increase awareness of the importance of watercourses, the conservation of the quality of the marine and coastal environment, and also the perspectives and implications of Sustainable Development in the coastal areas, a mobile caravan event organised in Saint George Gymnasium, Sfântu Gheorghe located Danube Delta area.

Students of the Saint George Gymnasium School had a chance to hear about the Danube River, its connection with the Black Sea, the importance of estuaries as well as guidance document Black Sea SRIA, the blue economy concept, and more from experts and academicians from BSUN, GeoEcoMar (online connection), Niccolo Cusano University and EcoHornet Ltd.

2nd Black Sea CONNECT Caravan on Blue Economy (12 May 2023, Sofia, Bulgaria):

The 2nd activity was organised at the High School of Computer Programming and Innovation (with the recommendation of Burgas Municipality) in Bulgaria on 12 May 2023.

The Caravan aimed to raise awareness of the difficulties related to the protection of the Black Sea, challenges, and opportunities. At the presentations, aspects of the connectivity of the Black Sea with the catchment area, the influence of different rivers, and the specific aspects of semi-closed seas were highlighted. As well as these, discussions on the marine litter problem, the possibility to use Information Technology to educate people to protect the Black Sea and reduce marine litter conducted with students.

Following the 2nd caravan event, Black Sea CONNECT, its role in the sustainable blue economy in the Black Sea and more shared at the visit of the Deans of Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”. The discussions have been oriented mostly towards the involvement of different faculties and the involvement of the future Branch of the University, which will be located in Burgas, on topics and aspects of the Blue Economy. This activity opened a room for further collaboration on Blue Economy and blue skills education.



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1st Mobile Caravan event, Romania, June 20212nd Mobile Caravan event, Bulgaria, May 2023**Figure 18** Mobile Caravan Events

3.2.2. Hackathon

With the aim of identifying innovative solutions for sustainable development, an online Blue Economy Hackathon organised by Task 4.2 lead BSUN, in collaboration with Hârşova City Hall on 29-30 June 2021. To this regional hackathon, 36 students from prestigious universities such as Vasile Alecsandri University of Bacău, Dunărea de Jos University of Galați, and Ovidius University of Constanta formed teams.

The hackathon participants presented their solution concepts. Following jury evaluations, the team from Vasile Alecsandri University of Bacău was announced as the winner of the Blue Economy Hackathon. The teams from Ovidius University and Dunărea de Jos University took second and third place in the Hackathon, respectively.

The winning team proposed a Unique Interdisciplinary Science Center in Harsova, where solutions for presenting the anthropogenic pressures on the Danube River Basin can be generated through the use of multimedia technologies, dioramas, stands and ways of interaction, as well as the active involvement of visitors in activities (citizens science, appealing and recreational games for children and other associated activities), ensured.

This Blue Economy Hackathon was initiated with the collaboration that started at International Conference on Blue Growth in the Black Sea Region: Ecosystem Services on River-Sea Macroecosystems. At the conference Prof. Maria Lekakou, from the University of the Aegean, Greece presented their experiences in organisations of hackathons and fruitful discussions ensued. With the partnership started after the conference, the NAVS Blue Hackathon, 29-30 May 2021 organised by the University of the Aegean was a good opportunity to observe and build Blue Economy Hackathon based on those experiences.

In light of the knowledge and experience gained through this pilot hackathon and the other two hackathons organised collaboratively, it has been planned the process of expanding and



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replicating the validated tools and best practices in all Black Sea countries and BSEC Member States. Based on the experience and lessons learned from these events, BSUN has prepared [guidelines](#) for Hackathons, covering all the procedures from the beginning to the end, for organizing a Hackathon which is also available on the Online Training Platform.

News: <http://connect2blacksea.org/the-blue-growth-hackathon/>



Figure 19 Blue Economy Hackathon, Online, 29-30 June 2021

3.2.3. Online Training Platform and Massive Open Online Course (MOOC)

An open training platform (OTP) was created with the goal of providing easy access to science base information and the Black Sea, blue economy , and sustainability-related MOOCs. (<https://bsun.org/pages/black-sea-connect-project/online-training-platform.php>) (<https://4biz.bsosc.eu/login>)

The platform aims to facilitate the delivery of open online courses on topics related to the Black Sea, themes and actions of the Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan for a large variety of experts acting within some specialized organizations or as freelancers such as teachers, sailors, biologists and other specialists (Figure 20). Creating an OTP is a pioneer in the establishment of a MOOC – Massive Open Online Courses on the Blue Economy in the Black Sea region.

The online training platform itself serves the implementation of the Black Sea SRIA IP Theme 12: Blue Skills and Capacity Building on Marine Sciences.

The platform has been developed by Task 4.2 lead BSUN and maintained under their website with a link to Black Sea CONNECT. The platform has been operational since 19 November 2020 and the maintenance, upgrading, and technical assistance services are regularly done by the BSUN team staff, in order to assure the required features. A User`s Manual for the Online Training Platform was prepared, which includes instructions regarding the easy-to-navigate of platform applications. (https://bsun.org/media/Online_Training_Platform_-_nextcloud/Users_Manual_Online_Training_Platform.pdf)



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The platform will be accessible under the BSUN network for an indefinite period of time.

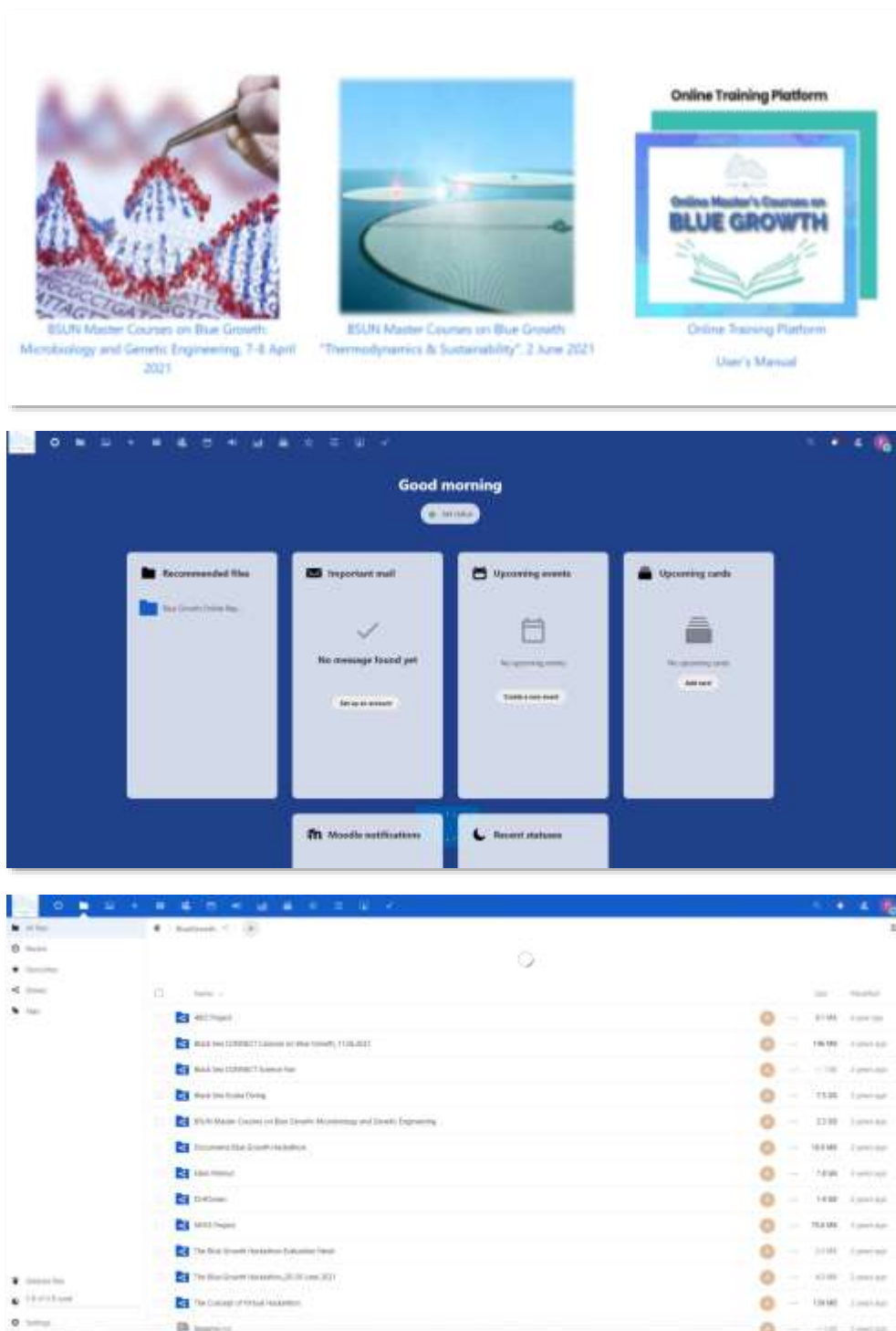


Figure 20 Online Training Platform Main Page, some content examples

Under this activity, a series of online master courses (Table 11) was initiated to contribute to the establishment of regional cooperation between the pre-university and university



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communities from the Black Sea region for developing MOOCs that will further support the development and implementation of a Regional Master Program on Blue Economy.

Within this series, there were prototyped two-course sessions, involving prestigious scholars from universities such as Wageningen University & Research and University of Rome I “La Sapienza”, University of Bucharest, “Ovidius” University of Constanta and Research organizations.

With these online courses, university students had a chance to listen to researchers and academicians in the field of marine biology, genetic engineering, sustainable energy, and marine environment protection not only from the Black Sea but also Europe.

Table 11 Master Courses on Blue Economy conducted under Online Training Platform & MOOC activity

Name of the activity	Organisers	How many students/people reached	Place / Time	Link (if any)
Master Courses on Blue Economy: Microbiology and Genetic Engineering	BSUN	100	Online, 7-8 April 2021	https://bsun.org/pages/black-sea-connect-project/online-training-platform.php
Master Courses on Blue Economy: "Thermodynamics & Sustainability"	BSUN	100	Online, 2 June 2021	https://bsun.org/pages/black-sea-connect-project/online-training-platform.php

News: <http://connect2blacksea.org/4173-2/>

3.2.5. Science and Art Fairs

Science Fairs

Science fairs are important tools for communicating science with the non-academic community and public engagement. Since they provide a platform for hands-on learning and real-world applications fairs help build a bridge between science and societies. Black Sea CONNECT met with a large audience at AstroFest Science Fair organised by Stiinta & Tehnica in Bucarest, Romania (2021, 2023).

AstroFest 2021 (23-24 June 2021, Bucharest, Romania): At the fair, Black Sea CONNECT was featured in the booth exhibition. As well as using regular communication materials to engage with the public, different movies regarding the blue economy, underwater archaeological heritage, and more were shown. Since the theme of the year was "We fly to the stars, but we protect the Earth", the connection between astronomy and marine science was shared with participants. Moreover, the beta version of the Serious Game "Diving in Blue" which has been developed by BSUN within the framework of the Black Sea CONNECT was



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displayed and took the attention of youth. (available at: <https://bsun.org/media/divinginblue.apk>)

Besides the booth, there was an oral presentation given by Eden Mamut from BSUN. In the speech named "The Stars, Winds, Waves, Us and the Sea – Blue Growth in the Black Sea Region", the importance of implementing the SRIA; its role in managing the fundamental challenges in the field of research in the Black Sea region; development of products, solutions and entrepreneurial approaches related to Blue Economy; building key infrastructures in the field of research and education, skills and Black Sea literacy development were emphasised.

Agenda: <https://stiintatehnica.com/astrofest-2021-program-invitati-observatii-astronomice/>

News: <https://bsun.org/pages/black-sea-connect-science-fair-astrofest-2021.php>

News: <http://connect2blacksea.org/black-sea-connect-is-in-astrofest-2021/>



Figure 21 AstroFest2021, June 2021, Romania

AstroFest 2023 (20 May 2023, Bucharest, Romania): At the fair, Black Sea CONNECT was featured in the booth exhibition in this edition of the fest. The project, SRIA, the blue economy in the Black Sea shared with the general public. To engage with kids and youth, a competition related to the protection of the Black Sea was organized and some small prizes were given as keepsakes. As well as booth, stressors on the Black Sea, Black Sea CONNECT, and SRIA as well as blue economy opportunities our sea basin shared with the participants

Agenda: <https://stiintatehnica.com/program-astrofest-2023-20-mai-parcul-crangasi/>



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News: <https://bsun.org/pages/black-sea-connect-astrofest-2023-science-fair.php>

News: <http://connect2blacksea.org/black-sea-connect-is-at-astrofest-2023/>



Figure 22 AstroFest2023, May 2023, Romania

Art Fair

Art met with Science at Black Sea CONNECT's "Healing the Black Sea by Art" exhibition. An Art fair dedicated to Black Sea Action Day organised by BSUN under Black Sea CONNECT on October 2021 to create an emotional connection with the Black Sea, and drawing attention to the stressors on sea ecosystems through art.

The virtual exhibition offered the opportunity to join a virtual showroom of creations (painting/photo/ construction with materials consisting of marine litter) with recorded presentations/text descriptions, where the language of visual arts generated synergies for promoting the protection of the Black Sea. The exhibition is active for the visitor (<https://bsun.org/pages/resources/artfair.php>).

At the exhibition 8 art piece displayed by students from Romania, Azerbaijan, and Greece. The Art competition based on this exhibition was held. The evaluation was conducted by jury members from different organisations. The evaluation was conducted taking into consideration the following aspects of the artworks: Originality, Quality, Expressiveness, Impact, Added-value to the promotion of the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda on Blue Growth in the



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Black Sea. The winners of the Black Sea CONNECT Art Fair “Healing the Black Sea by Art” were: student Tunzala Macidova from Western Caspian University – 1st Prize, student Revan Kerimov from Western Caspian University – 2nd Prize and student Nikos Karakolis from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki – 3rd Prize (Figure 23). The details of the exhibition and winner artworks can be found on the website <https://bsun.org/pages/black-sea-connect-art-fair-healing-the-black-sea-by-art.php>.



Winner of the 1st prize - Student Tunzala Macidova, Western Caspian University



Winner of the 2nd prize - Student Revan Kerimov, Western Caspian University



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Winner of the 3rd prize - Student Nikos Karakolis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Figure 23 Healing the Black Sea by Art Fair and its winners

News: <http://connect2blacksea.org/save-the-date-for-the-black-sea-connect-art-fair-healing-the-black-sea-by-art/>

3.2.6. Gaming

Playing games provides a dynamic and engaging platform for learning and raising awareness of marine life, biodiversity, and more. Games contribute to an interactive learning environment where players can make decisions, solve problems, and experience consequences based on their actions. This hands-on approach enhances understanding and retention of information. Hence, to better engage the public, especially kids and youth entertainingly under Black Sea CONNECT project online game repository has been created and it has been operational since 9 December 2020. At the repository, there are different browsers, computers, and mobile games which integrate the Serious Game “Diving in Blue” that users can learn by playing (<https://bluejoy.bsun.org/>). They are dedicated to raising awareness on not only marine life but also the stressors on seas such as marine pollution including plastic. Brief info on the aim of the games is given on related web pages. The games are provided by different resources and they are copyright free.

The games currently can be found on the repository listed below:

- Browser Games; i) Slashin’ Trash, ii) Operation Ocean; iii) Fish Saviour Simulator
- Computer Games; i) Ocean Ecobalancer
- Mobile Game; i) Serious Game “Diving in Blue”



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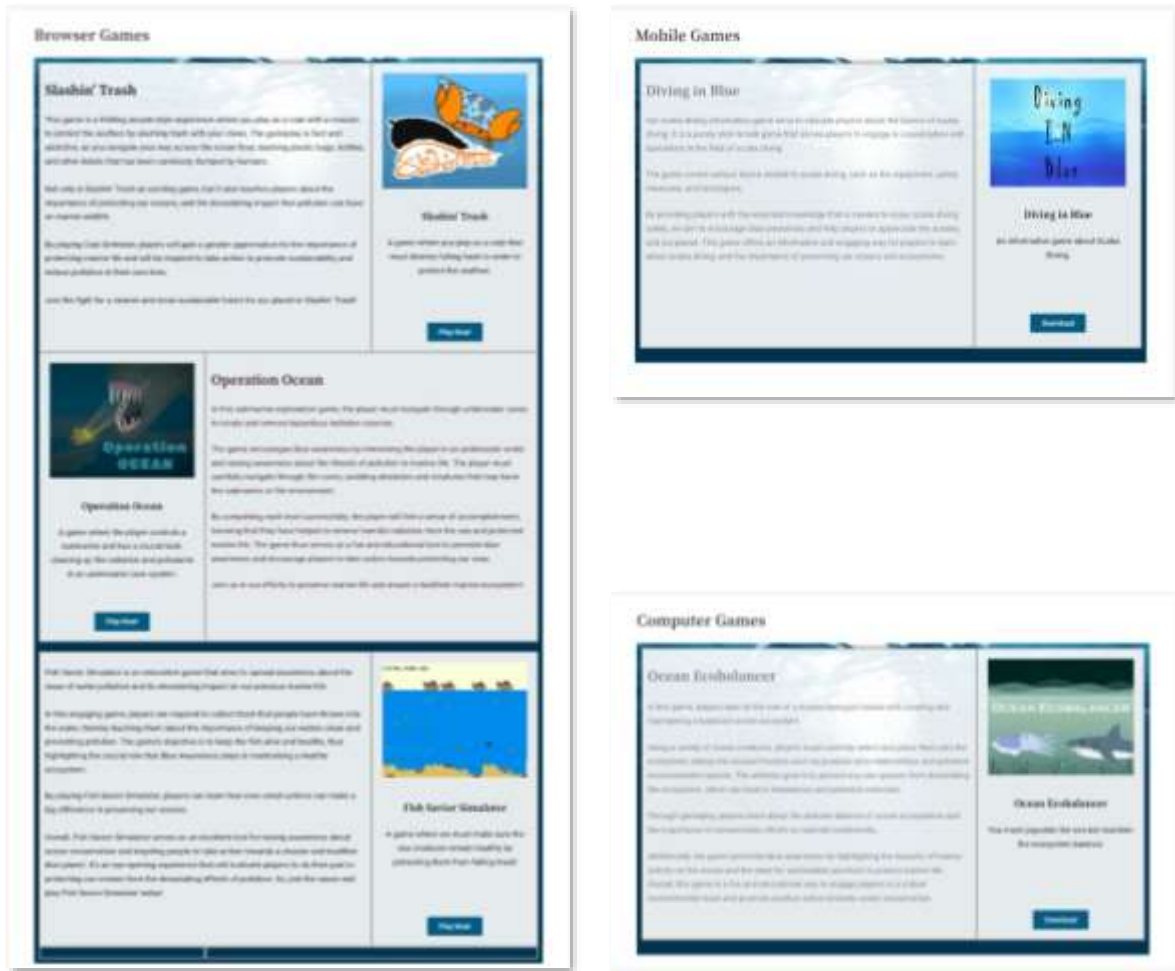


Figure 24 Gaming repository including browser, computer, and mobile games

This online gaming repository is the first phase of game development. They have been provided and ideas for the content and mission for the game will be developed. The second step was creating content. As a result of the ideas formed by the games, the meetings conducted with Black Sea CONNECT partners as well as opinions gained by a group of high school students, the aim and mission of the game were decided. The mobile game that has been developed, should include the mapping of the Marine Protected Areas, details on the Black Sea’s flora and fauna besides scuba diving clubs, tour operators, and legal and normative framework in the maritime sector identified. As a third step, it has been engaged with different software companies to create a game with some simplified models on ecosystem services connected with blue economy principles, especially under human impact scenarios (fisheries, energy, and tourism).

Then as a next step, the beta version of the "Diving in Blue" game was developed using the Unity platform, a game engine developed by Unity Technologies, used mainly to develop video games and simulations for computers, consoles, and mobile devices. "Diving in Blue", which is initially available for use in Android systems, has two main components:



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1. Offline - for information purposes, including legislation on cultural underwater heritage, diving routes, marine protected areas, flora and fauna specific to the Black Sea, and possible coastal tourist attractions
2. Online - for interactive purposes, allowing users to take on certain roles, such as Tourist, Scuba diving instructor, etc. The users will be able to communicate and interact according to their interests.

"Diving in Blue" offers the following items: information on all the necessary steps in the scuba diving activity depending on the role, as well as price offers for specific tours or areas worth discovering; information on the medical aspects, the health condition of the user; tutorials presenting this activity for beginners as well as informative videos; entertainment and reward system.

The application is addressed especially to young people aged 15 to 25, having an important role in raising awareness among the young generation, by understanding the issues related to the Black Sea and the existence of challenges regarding its protection. The game can be downloaded on mobile phones and played via the following webpage (https://bluejoy.bsun.org/?page_id=118)

News: <http://connect2blacksea.org/gaming-of-blue-growth-in-the-black-sea/>

3.2.7. Black Sea Observatory on Blue Economy

“Open Science” is important while implementing SRIAs for accelerating progress, maximising resources, ensuring interdisciplinary collaboration, and more. Hence “Black Sea Observatory on Blue Economy” aimed to create a platform for the stakeholders related to the Black Sea, Blue Economy, and beyond where they can reach open access publications and documents related to SRIA and its implementations easily.

The platform developed under Task 4.2 lead BSUN’s network (<https://observatory.bsosc.eu/>) and can be accessed under the Black Sea CONNECT website.

There is guidance for the users they can use for navigation on the platform (<https://observatory.bsosc.eu/wp-uploads/ObservatoryUserManual.pdf>).

This online-based observatory will both supply a platform for the circulation of scientific information and bring together different layers of society, ensuring that science is easily accessible to policymakers, scientists, and the general public including youth.



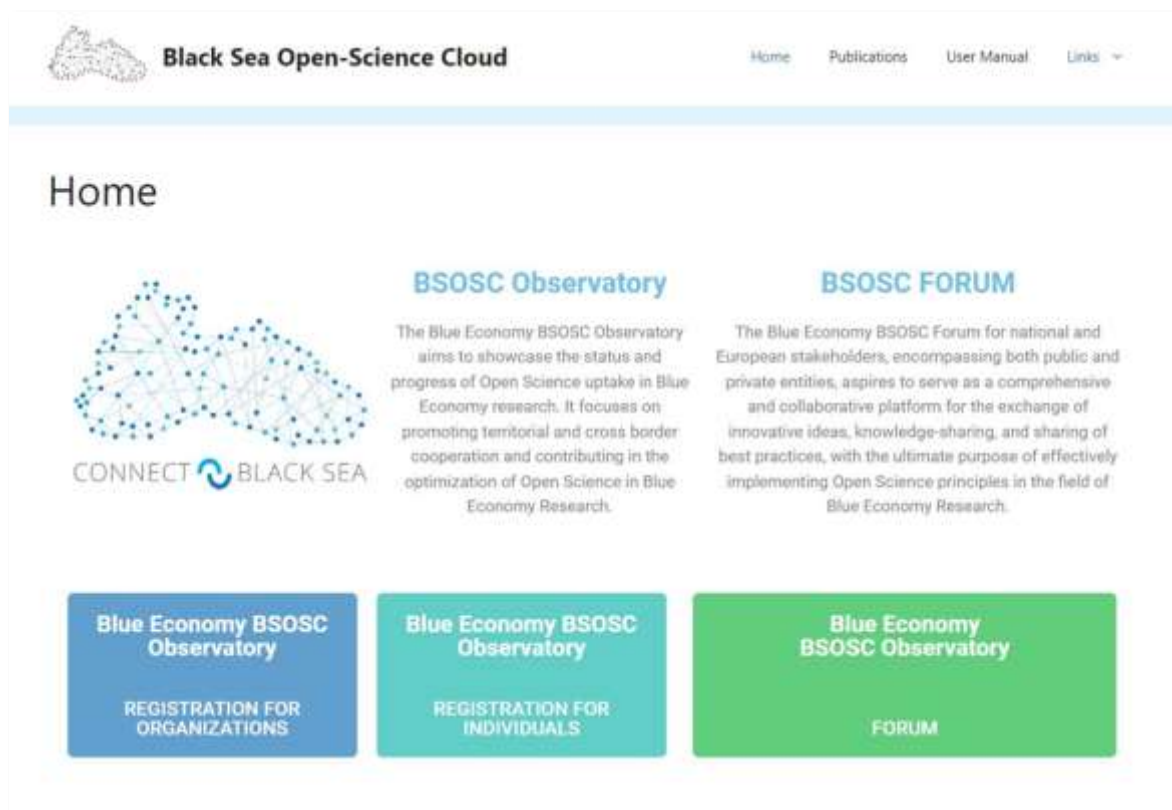


Figure 25 Black Sea Observatory on Blue Economy main page (<https://observatory.bsosc.eu/>)

News: <http://connect2blacksea.org/black-sea-observatory-on-blue-growth/>

3.3. Black Sea Young Ambassadors Programme (T4.3, Lead METU)



Figure 26 Black Sea Young Ambassadors (L: 1st Cohort, R: 2nd Cohort)

The Black Sea Young Ambassador (BSYA) Programme was developed to unite youth for the future of the Black Sea, for a healthy, resilient, and sustainable Black Sea, in September 2020, under the Black Sea CONNECT CSA. Black Sea Young Ambassadors are young early career ocean professionals (ECOPs) who come from different backgrounds in marine and maritime



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research, industry, policy, and civil society, and either in educational programmes or in the early stages of their carrier.

Since there is a Black Sea Young Ambassadors dedicated deliverable called “D4.5 Report on Black Sea Young Ambassadors’ Activities” herein this report only the framework and some highlights will be shared. Details of the programme can be found in the related deliverable.

Since September 2020, these young voices of the Black Sea support the CSA to develop Black Sea literate societies and increase awareness of our unique sea basin and its rivers. The BSYA journey started with 17 brilliant ECOPs from all Black Sea countries. They received different trainings to be equipped for their future activities, represented the Black Sea in the different platforms at the Black Sea, EU, and global levels as well as conducted in-person and online awareness-raising campaigns (Table 12).

Table 12 Highlights from the activities of BSYA 1st Cohort (2020-2022)

Event / Activity	Date	Place
Orientation Meeting	12 October 2020	Online
SRIA National Consultation Meetings	September-October 2020	Online, Hybrid (BG, GE, MD, RO, TR, and UA)
Research and Innovation in the Black Sea: Empowering the next generation for a healthy, resilient, and productive Black Sea http://connect2blacksea.org/research-and-innovation-in-the-black-sea-empowering-the-next-generation-for-a-healthy-resilient-and-productive-black-sea/	29-30 October 2020	Online
UN Ocean Decade Virtual Early Career Ocean Professionals Day 2021: The Black Sea Wind in our sails, to the ocean we want! http://connect2blacksea.org/vecop-day-2021-the-black-sea-wind-in-our-sails-to-the-ocean-we-want/	02 June 2021	Online
Autumn School http://connect2blacksea.org/black-sea-young-ambassadors-autumn-school-2021/	02-03 November 2021	Online
Black Tea Time Meetings with Youth (i.e. EU Clean Up Day, ECOP) http://connect2blacksea.org/2nd-black-tea-time-with-youth/	Regular Basis	Online



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Social Media Campaigns (i.e. Black Sea Action Day, Plastic Free Black Sea)	Regular Basis	Online
Awareness Raising Campaign Development Workshop http://connect2blacksea.org/black-sea-young-ambassadors-awareness-raising-campaign-development-workshop/	01 February 2022	Online
Awareness Raising Campaigns http://connect2blacksea.org/black-sea-young-ambassadors-awareness-raising-activities/	February to August 2022	Physical / Online (GE, RO, MD, TR)
Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan Launch Event http://connect2blacksea.org/press-release-on-the-launch-of-the-black-sea-sria-implementation-plan/	04 May 2023	European Parliament, Brussels

One of the highlights has been the outreach activities conducted by the Young Ambassadors during Spring-Summer 2022 period which are detailed in D4.5 but as they were important dissemination and communication activities for raising awareness on the Black Sea and Black Sea Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda, they are also overviewed briefly below.

Youth Power - Towards a healthy Black Sea: Exploring the Black Sea's Beauties Together, Romania. The aim was

- To raise awareness about the unique features of the Black Sea, its biodiversity, cultural heritage, and multi-stressors;
- To encourage youth to promote and protect the Black Sea, and adopt environmentally responsible behaviour;
- To help children understand why it is important to protect the Black Sea region, in order to ensure a sustainable future.

One workshop on secondary school children on Black Sea's unique features and one beach activity on invasive species as stressors in the Black Sea, Romania.

Love your rivers to protect the Black Sea: River clean-up activity on Dniester Day and Danube Day, Moldova. The aim was

- To improve the environmental conditions of the rivers for less polluted water discharge into the Black Sea;
- To provide necessary information to Moldovan youth about the intense pollution of rivers;
- To promote the National Youth Network "Love your river!"



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Educated and sensitized Georgian youth for the sustainable development of the Black Sea: fieldwork on the coast of the Black Sea combined with beach clean-up activity and informative session on the blue economy, Georgia. The aim was

- To raise awareness of the youth about marine litter and other human activities damaging oceans and seas through current challenge-responsive activities;
- To encourage and engage youth to protect seawater from pollution;
- To promote and support coastline and seawater cleansing.

Visual Storytelling of The Black Sea: Different Shores, Different Reflections, and One Sea (Black Sea wide). The aim was

- To raise awareness on the diversity of the Black Sea. (economic, cultural etc.)
- To highlight the services and the resources provided by the Black Sea as well as our commitment toward sustainable management of this sea basin.
- To showcase the negative effect of increasing intensity of human disturbance in the Black Sea ecosystems (pollution including plastic, climate change, eutrophication, overfishing, biodiversity loss, etc.)

Video blogs with marine scientists and Blue Economy experts (Black Sea wide) The aim was

- To raise awareness on the marine science research and blue economy sectors in the Black Sea.
- To connect scientists, experts to the general public for communicating science.



Figure 27 Black Sea Young Ambassador Awareness Raising Campaigns; Selma Menabit, Romania



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Figure 28 Black Sea Young Ambassador Awareness Raising Campaigns; Elena Culighin, Moldova



Figure 29. Black Sea Young Ambassador Awareness Raising Campaigns; Salome Kobaidze, Georgia



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Figure 30 Black Sea Young Ambassador Awareness Raising Campaigns; Oana Poiana, Romania

Considering the success of the programme, the BSYA has been linked with the Black Sea Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda implementing the EU H2020 BRIDGE-BS project not only for increasing the impact and visibility of the programme but also to ensure its sustainability. Together with BRIDGE-BS, the foundations of the BSYAs' work and efforts and the bridge, they have created between society and science will be getting stronger and broader in scope. The legacy of the Black Sea Young Ambassadors Programme will continue under the BRIDGE-BS project once the Black Sea CONNECT project comes to an end.

After creating this link, to provide opportunities for the new ECOPS and increase the youth network in the Black Sea, a new BSYA cohort joined the forces in September 2022. Now 15 promising young ambassadors from six Black Sea countries (BG, GE, MD, RO, TR, and UA) and 6 senior young ambassadors from the previous cohort as their mentors united for shaping the future of the Black Sea (<http://connect2blacksea.org/outreach-youth-ambassadors-2ndcohort/>).

They follow a similar path as having orientation on fundamentals of blue economy, science communication, activities of the Black Sea CONNECT and BRIDGE-BS projects linked with youth, education, and capacity building to better shape their future activities. They represented youth at the Black Sea SRIA national consultations as well as contributed to defining SRIA Implementation Plan priorities.

They made a swift start by being the voice of the youth at the Launch event of the SRIA Implementation Plan and made their pledges to support this comprehensive plan at any level



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(<http://connect2blacksea.org/press-release-on-the-launch-of-the-black-sea-sria-implementation-plan/>).

Furthermore, they received their first training on ocean literacy and science communication in Istanbul, Türkiye on 12-13 June 2023. Here they also carried out group work and discussions as the first steps of subsequent awareness-raising efforts (<http://connect2blacksea.org/empowering-the-black-sea-young-ambassadors-with-summer-training/>).

Regularly, they conducted Black Tea Time with Youth meetings and hear more about different programmes, and initiatives they can be part of and contribute to as Black Sea youth and ECOPS such as the EU Mission Ocean Programme and Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan.

Based on the first training received, they created preliminary ideas for their future awareness-raising activities/campaigns. Regular meetings will be conducted with their national mentors and coordination team to finalize these preliminary ideas and realize their campaigns.

As well as conducting awareness-raising campaigns, they will continue to represent Black Sea youth in different events and activities at national, regional, and international levels.

Table 13 Highlights from the activities of BSYA 2nd Cohort (2020-2022)

Event / Activity	Date	Place
Orientation Meeting http://connect2blacksea.org/the-black-sea-young-ambassadors-orientation-meeting-was-successfully-held/	19 January 2023	Online
Social Media Intros https://twitter.com/blackseayouth/status/1626505882069499904?s=48&t=CNKaga333aNTripAf5QBbg	February - April 2023	Online
Black Sea SRIA Implementation Plan Launch Event http://connect2blacksea.org/press-release-on-the-launch-of-the-black-sea-sria-implementation-plan/	04 May 2023	European Parliament, Brussels
Black Tea Time Meetings with Youth (i.e. EU Mission Ocean, SRIA IP)	Regular Basis	Online
Summer Training		Istanbul, Türkiye



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http://connect2blacksea.org/empowering-the-black-sea-young-ambassadors-with-summer-training/		
Awareness Raising Campaign Development http://connect2blacksea.org/black-sea-young-ambassadors-awareness-raising-activities/	Ongoing process	Online

All Black Sea Youth activities can be found on both the BSYA-related webpages under Black Sea CONNECT and BRIDGE BS websites as well as BSYA social media channels.

Table 14 Black Sea Young Ambassadors Webpages and Social Media Channels

Channel	Link
Black Sea Connect	http://connect2blacksea.org/outreach/youth-ambassadors/
BRIDGE-BS	http://bridgeblacksea.org/index.php/young-ambassadors/
Twitter (The new X)	https://twitter.com/BlackSeaYouth
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/BlackSeaYouth
Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/blackseayouth/



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4. CONCLUSION

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the war, visibility and dissemination activities of the Black Sea CONNECT were successfully carried out. Although many activities and events in the first half of the project were held online, the impact of the visibility and dissemination efforts were striking thanks to the 360-degree communication strategy, fast adaptation, and effective communication in this high-tech era. Diversification of dissemination efforts and use of various mediums and tools allowed engagement of different stakeholders into the project activities and news.

The events organised/attended as representatives of the Black Sea CONNECT, the visibility of the CSA and Black Sea Blue Economy Initiative gradually increased and seeds of future collaborations for health and sustainable seas were planted. While events including workshops, forums, and conferences help the CSA reach out mostly to academia, policymakers, and sector and NGO representatives, awareness and outreach events/activities ensure to create a connection with the general public including youth.

The project's online presence, encompassing a well-maintained website, vibrant social media engagement, and informative e-newsletter has proven instrumental in disseminating all news, events, and achievements of the project. Additionally, mass media and press coverage helped to further disseminate Black Sea CONNECT, especially at the local and national levels.

The CSA has other powerful supporters, Black Sea Young Ambassadors, who helped the most while reaching out not only to youth at the Black Sea but also beyond our basin. They conducted different awareness-raising campaigns, became the voice of our basin in various places, and be a bridge between Black Sea Youth and other basins youth advocates.

Legacy of the Black Sea CONNECT, Black Sea Blue Economy will continue with SRIA implementing H2020 projects and Black Sea Young Ambassadors even after the project's lifetime. And dissemination and exploitation will be ensured with the support of those ongoing programmes.



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