



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Black Sea NGO Forum, XIIIth edition
Advancing Civil Society Cooperation in the Black Sea Region
in Times of Uncertainty

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Online

The year 2020, through the emergence and spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, is a different one, being marked as the year of challenges, but also the year of change and innovation on all levels of societies all around the globe. Civil society, as a whole, has been facing new contexts, challenges and opportunities for its medium and long term development and sustainability.

In this framework, the consequences of the spread of the pandemic, the decisions taken or implemented by important stakeholders, together with the challenges faced by the civil society sector are yet subjects to be analyzed. However, as highlighted in the Policy Paper “*The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Civil Society Sector in the Black Sea Region*” elaborated by the Romanian NGDO Platform - FOND, in the context of the pandemic, civil society organizations from the Black Sea Region mark a trend of multilateral dialogue and regional partnerships both inside and outside the sector, coming together to initiate and implement effective joint solutions to the problems they face.

At the 2019 edition, held in Istanbul, the Black Sea NGO Forum representatives addressed for the first time a more in-depth concept of resilience of the civil society sector. Nowadays, under pressure from the spread of the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, discussions about resilience, adaptation and strategic partnerships have become more important than ever.

Taking account of all of these new realities, the Black Sea NGO Forum, as a **driver of change in the Region**, will continue to create an open space for debate, for sharing mutual knowledge and understanding, communication and cooperation among civil society representatives, by building trust and developing joint initiatives.

The 2020 edition, through its unique format, will contribute to **identifying the common challenges that the civil society organizations and facing right now**, as well as **opportunities for addressing them together**, with specific focus on:

- *Raising awareness on success stories of CSOs in the Region during the COVID-19 pandemic;*
- *Showcasing donors’ response for supporting CSO development and resilience in this new challenging context;*
- *Presenting the progress made and next steps for the implementation of European Union’s policies in the Black Sea Region: the Black Sea Synergy, the Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea, the Black Sea Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda and the European Green Deal;*
- *Creating a space for debate on Enabling Environment for civil society organizations in the Black Sea Region in the first half of 2020;*





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- *Strengthening the importance of engaging in regional multistakeholder cooperation, with an emphasis on best practices and lessons learned on developing and consolidation civil society- public-private sectors partnerships.*
- *Highlighting the main achievements and future strategic actions of the Black Sea NGO Forum in fostering regional cooperation, through the project “Building CSO Capacity for Regional Cooperation within the Black Sea Region”, funded by the European Union.*

The first edition of the Black Sea NGO Forum was organised in 2008 as a unique regional event by the Romanian NGDO Platform - FOND, with the support of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Representation of the European Commission and the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation. The Forum was initiated within the framework of the Black Sea Synergy, a European policy launched at the initiative of Romania, Bulgaria and Greece with the purpose of consolidating regional cooperation at the Black Sea.

The XIIIth edition of the Black Sea NGO Forum is organized by the Romanian NGDO Platform - FOND, with financial support of the European Union and in partnership with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania.

