



Balkans & Black Sea Cooperation Forum

Friday May 26th

Forum Declaration 2017 "Cultural Tourism, a key to Sustainable Development"

We, the participants of the First Balkans & Black Sea Cooperation Forum, held in the city of Serres, Greece, from 25 to 26 May 2017, express our willingness and readiness to actively promote cultural tourism, as a key to sustainable development for the benefit of all peoples in the Balkans and Black Sea region.



Our region is rich in diverse cultural heritage, possessing vibrant creative forces and the capacity to build on a wide and positive experience in stimulating growth through the protection of the distinctive natural and human-made landmarks abundant in our region.

Through the promotion of Cultural Tourism we aim to strengthen the protection of cultural heritage, streamline and facilitate its promotion and stimulate inter-cultural dialogue, prosperity, peace and stability, through an increased support to cultural production, education, research and science.

In this framework, we are ready to contribute to the formulation of a Master Plan for the promotion of Cultural Tourism, with the aim to create a practical platform for **connecting destinations** in the Balkans and Black Sea region and provide to the cultural and creative industries an environment allowing them to continue expanding, creating growth and increasing employment. The adoption of such a Master Plan and its implementation process will further facilitate the enhancement of interaction between Government officials, regions, entrepreneurs, academia, NGO's and, last but not least, young people, providing fresh incentives for exchanges, common projects and initiatives.

We express our gratitude and appreciation to the hosts and organizers of the First Balkans & Black Sea Cooperation Forum for their hospitality and excellent organization of the events and renew our promise to continue working together to promote Cultural Tourism in a manner meeting our mutual expectations – increasing sustainability, performance and quality of life.

May 26th 2017, Serres | Greece

<p>Official Partner Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation</p>		<p>Strategic Partners</p>	<p>Black Sea Trade & Development Bank</p> 		
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Balkans & Black Sea Cooperation Forum

Friday September 15th 2017

Masterplan for the interconnectivity of destinations in the Balkans & Black Sea Region Based on Forum Declaration 2017, held in Serres-Greece

The Balkans & Black Sea Cooperation Forum 2017 (BBSF) which concluded in Serres, Greece on May 26th 2017, conveyed key message that stakeholders should prompt and joining forces for closer cooperation, economic growth and sustainable development in the **Balkans** and the wider **Black Sea region**.

Paving the path for enhancing multilateral relations & business opportunities, **BBSF 2017 Declaration** enrolled **“Cultural Tourism, a key to Sustainable Development”** as element to the **interconnectivity of destinations** in the BBSF region, held under the auspices of the Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, Black Sea Trade and Development Bank, European Banking Federation and the **support** of UNWTO & UNESCO.

A **masterplan** for the **interconnectivity of destinations** in the **Balkans & Black Sea region** was presented on September 15th 2017 during a BBSF special event during the 82nd Thessaloniki International Fair, and being copied to the Diplomatic Missions of the countries BBSF is concerned, for further action with their home authorities.

Masterplan foresees at generating regional **cultural-experiential routes** to promoting cultural tourism, expanding growth and **increasing employment**, through the protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, stimulation of intercultural dialogue for peace & stability, and enhancement of interaction between Governmental officials, Regions, Businesses, Academia & NGO's.

BBSF masterplan seeking to promoting **off the beaten track** places, prolonging **seasonality**, stimulating **local societies**, increasing **hospitality**, reviving sights, advancing **new technologies**, facilitating **capacity building** and reducing youth **unemployment**, whilst **Youth** will be **at the forefront** and heart of the project.

At stakeholders discretion is to elaborate further about the cultural & tourism connectivity in the **Balkans & Black Sea region**, so that the programme will be going live in late Autumn 2018 under the support and the contribution of [Geo Routes Cultural Institute](#).

For more information
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<p>Official Partner Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation</p>		<p>with the cooperation</p>	  
		<p>under the auspices</p>	<p>With the support of UNESCO</p>  <p>With the participation of</p> 