

PROPOSAL

for launching a small project for preparation of a business plan for establishment of the Black Sea European College

1. Background for establishment of the Black Sea European College

Communication of the European Commission to the Council of Europe and the European Parliament “BLACK SEA SYNERGY - A NEW REGIONAL COOPERATION INITIATIVE” of 11 April 2007 provides for efforts to stimulate democratic and economic reforms, to project stability and to support development in the Black Sea area through wide ranging cooperation programmes. In particular, article 3.1 of the Communication notes that the EU should support regional initiatives through sharing experience on measures to promote and uphold human rights and democracy, providing training and exchange programmes and stimulating a regional dialogue with civil society.

On 14 February 2008, at the meeting of Foreign Ministers of the EU Member States and the Black Sea Region countries, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, German Federal Foreign Minister announced an initiative to establish the Black Sea Centre for European Studies.

On 22 May 2008 during the EU Troika Ministerial Meeting with Ukraine, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine presented a letter of interest on establishing the Black Sea European College in Ukraine to the European Commission.

Communication of the European Commission to the Council of Europe and the European Parliament titled “REPORT ON THE FIRST YEAR OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BLACK SEA SYNERGY” of 19 June 2008 stressed the readiness of the EC and EU Member-States to further study the idea of establishment of the Black Sea European College.

Under Communication of the European Commission to the Council of Europe and the European Parliament “Eastern Partnership” of 3 December 2008, the European Commission proposed to allocate additional funding, and cooperate with partners on pilot regional development programmes addressing local needs (including needs for human capital development). The Communication provides for cooperation on existing trans-national programmes in South-Eastern Europe and promotion of interactions between citizens from Partner Countries and the EU, in particular young people, notably interactions in the frame of the EU’s external assistance programmes in the area of education, including language learning, youth and research.

European Commission Staff working document accompanying the Communication “Eastern Partnership” provides for support of partners working towards reforms in line with the Bologna Process and integration into the emerging European Research and Higher Education Area.

Article 3 of European Commission Declaration on Eastern Partnership (19-20 March 2009) provides for complementarity with regional initiatives between the European Union and relevant Partner Countries, in particular the Black Sea Synergy. The European Council stresses the EU’s obligation to strengthen the Black Sea Synergy and supports its implementation.

Article 14 of the Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit of 7 May 2009 also provides for complementarity with regional initiatives between the European Union and relevant Partner Countries, in particular the Black Sea Synergy.

In accordance with the Joint Cooperation Initiative in Crimea it was agreed to mobilize resources for the development of the region, simultaneously spreading and promoting the EU's visibility. The initiative provides for support for information and culture sectors as well as development of the civil society.

2. Rationale for establishment of the Black Sea European College in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and in Sevastopol, in particular

Sevastopol is a major centre in the Black Sea Region countries and the Eastern Partnership Region as a whole. The city is centrally located and therefore equally distant from the coastal regions of the surrounding Black Sea Basin countries: 490km from Istanbul, 393km from Constanta, 472km from Varna, and 746km from Poti.

Given the fact that Sevastopol has lost its importance as a naval base, reforming and developing the city as the international centre is a natural option. In this regard, a project on creation of a free economy zone is currently being implemented in Sevastopol. In December 2008, the President of Ukraine signed a Decree on additional measures for social and economic development of Sevastopol. In June 2009, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved a plan of additional measures for Sevastopol's social and economic development. A draft bill on special economic and legal regime of attracting national and foreign investment to Sevastopol is currently being developed.

Sevastopol is the most environmentally clean city in Crimea, which represents substantial potential for the development of the city as an international centre.

Sevastopol is among five top Ukrainian cities with highest rate of growth of economy, social standards, culture, education and science. The city has the lowest unemployment rate after Kiev.

There are 33,000 students and 31,000 schoolchildren in Sevastopol. More than 30 universities and higher education institutions operate in Sevastopol with many of them being branches of reputable Ukrainian and Russian universities.

The Sevastopol City Humanitarian University was established in November 2003 by the decision of the Sevastopol City Council. As of today, there are 1,173 students enrolled in the University: 741 of them are full-time students, and 432 are part-time students. The University has two buildings with the total area of 3.5 thousand square meters and 3.2 thousand of which are used as lecture halls. Additional almost 2.2 thousand square meters of lecture halls space are used on contractual basis. In addition, the university has free plots of land which in the future can be used for building additional university buildings or other structures.

***Infrastructure details:** The University has 21 lecture halls, 3 computer labs with modern computers and multimedia equipment and 3 specialised use rooms. In addition to its own premises the University leases 600 square meters of lecture halls, 1,020 square meters of practice lecture halls and 800 square meters of gyms and 360 square meters of conference halls. Thus, the total area used by the University totals more than 5 thousand square meters and also includes its own medical station, cafeteria, 2 libraries and reading halls.*

3. Experience of cross-regional and European educational and scientific institutions

There are several educational and scientific institutions in Europe which deal with European integration and have cross-regional status, namely:

The College of Europe is a private independent postgraduate education institution that was set up in Bruges, Belgium in 1949. In 1992 the college opened its campus in Natolin, Poland. The college's curriculum includes lectures, seminars, research and meetings with experts from other countries.

In Bruges, students enrol in one of four academic departments: (i) law, (ii) economics, (iii) politics and administration, and (iv) international relations and diplomacy. Upon completion, students are awarded respectively the following degrees of Master in European Law (LLM), Master of Arts in European Economic Studies, Master of Arts in European Political and Administrative Studies or Master of Arts in EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies.

In Natolin the study programme analyzes the process of European integration from a multi-disciplinary perspective. It offers students the possibility to analyze the European integration process beyond disciplinary boundaries and to acquire deepened knowledge of the European Union. The programme is aimed at university graduates with an academic background not only in law, economics, political science, history, social sciences, but also at university graduates in other disciplines who demonstrate a high academic level and a keen interest in European affairs. Upon completion, students are awarded certificates in Master of Arts in European Interdisciplinary Studies. The degree is currently considered for obtaining a status in accordance with the Bologna Process.

The International Centre for Black Sea Studies was established *in Greece* as a non-profit, non-governmental research organization, which concentrates on research of the Black Sea region issues, implementation of regional projects in the sphere of science and technology. On the other hand, it is also an "expert commission" working in the context of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and generating new ideas. The Centre's programme provides for international forums, annual conferences, lectures, symposiums, research programmes, exchange of best practice, and training events for professionals and officials who deal with the Black Sea Region's problems.

4. Objective of establishment of the Black Sea European College

Creation of the Black Sea European College will promote development on regional possibilities in the context of the **EU's Eastern Partnership**, in particular in the frame of the Joint Cooperation Initiative in Crimea by means of training professionals and officials who are involved in the decision-making in the Eastern Partnership countries and exchange of EU's best practices and standards,

On the other hand, The College will also allow for conducting research and discussing problems in the Black Sea Region in order to neutralize differences between regions and social groups (depressive or conflict-prone regions of the EU Neighbouring Countries) by means of facilitation of separate instruments of the EU regional development policy. This applies to cooperation on preservation of historical heritage, national minorities, promotion of cultural ties, solutions to transportation and environmental problems in the Black Sea Region.

Objective of establishment of the Black Sea European College is to improve qualifications of representatives of the central and local government authorities as well as experts from the Black Sea Region countries who deal with different aspects of EU policies, research of regional problems and solutions developed for and applied in the EU, and establishing contacts and networks with professionals throughout the region in order to exchange best practice.

5. The aim of creation of the small project

The process of establishment of the Black Sea European College requires consideration of a large number of various (and often different) views and inputs from all interested parties (the European Union (the European Commission and EU Member-States), Eastern Partnership and Black Sea Region Countries).

This may require preparation of a cross-regional project (programme) which would include a number of projects complementing each other in accordance with the capabilities and aims of various donors.

Taking into account the necessity for engagement of considerable amounts of resources from a variety of possible sources of funding (subject to different rules and procedures) and need for ensuring sustainable functioning of the Black Sea College in the future, it is essential to launch a small project of preparation of a document guiding the establishment of the Black Sea European College consistent with the European best practice (business plan).

6. Expected outcomes of the small project:

As a result of the small project the following document will be developed:

- Documents defining political rationale for creation of such institution;
- Feasibility study for the Black Sea European College;
- Possibly, a cross-regional Project (Programme) for establishment of the College taking into account consolidation, coordination and harmonisation of efforts of different donor organizations in accordance with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

7. Interested parties

The direct partner for the project will be the Sevastopol City State Administration. In addition, the Coordination Bureau for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of the Secretariat of Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, the Ministry of Science and Education of Ukraine, the Ministry of Regional Development and Construction of Ukraine, and the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine will be interacting with the project and constitute the target group of project interlocutors as required.

The Ukrainian and Crimean Governments (and the College in the future) will be project beneficiaries.

Institutions proposed to be in charge of the project are two Departments of the Sevastopol City State Administration: (i) Department of International relations and Protocol with Yevgen Chygrynskyy as the Department Head; and (ii) Department of Education and Science with Mykola Cherbadzhy as the Department Head.

The Draft Concept of Establishment of the Black Sea European College is enclosed.