

PRESS RELEASE

BLACK SEA MOU HELD ITS TWENTY-SIXTH PORT STATE CONTROL COMMITTEE MEETING IN VARNA, BULGARIA

Varna, BULGARIA –The Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control in the Black Sea Region (Black Sea MoU) held the 26th meeting of its Port State Control Committee (PSCC26) from 21 to 23 April 2026 in Varna, Bulgaria. The meeting was chaired by Captain Hayri Hasandayioğlu, Head of the Ship Inspection Department of the Republic of Türkiye.

The session was formally opened by Captain Ventsislav Ivanov, Executive Director of the Bulgarian Maritime Administration, who welcomed the delegates and expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to host the meeting. In his opening remarks, Captain Ivanov emphasized the vital role of port State control in ensuring maritime safety, security, and environmental protection. He also underlined the importance of effective cooperation among Member Authorities and commended their continued professionalism and dedication.

The meeting was attended by all the 6 Member Authorities, Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation, Türkiye and Ukraine, as well as observers from Azerbaijan, Moldova, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Abuja MoU, the Mediterranean MoU, the Paris MoU, the Tokyo MoU, and the Viña del Mar Agreement attended to the meeting. Observers of Kazakhstan, United States Coast Guard, the Indian Ocean MoU, the Riyadh MoU and the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution were unable to attend.

The Committee reviewed and approved the report on the Concentrated Inspection Campaign (CIC) on Ballast Water Management conducted in 2025. It confirmed its participation in the joint CIC on Cargo Securing in 2026, in cooperation with the Paris and Tokyo MoUs and under the coordination of the Bulgarian Maritime Administration. The Committee also agreed to participate in the joint CIC on Enclosed Space Entry in 2027.

The Committee was informed of ongoing efforts to review and enhance inspection campaign methodologies, including Focused Inspection Campaign (FIC) trials on fire doors and insurance certificates under the Civil Liability Convention (CLC). It agreed to continue such trials and to explore further opportunities for joint inspection campaign initiatives with other Regional PSC regimes.

The Committee noted that the detention rate in 2025 reached 6.78%, representing the highest level recorded since 2007 and the third highest since the establishment of the Black Sea MoU. In view of the observed upward trend, the Committee agreed to undertake a detailed statistical analysis to identify the underlying causes and support appropriate measures.

The Committee reviewed progress on the trial phase of the bulk data download function for Flag States and Recognized Organizations and agreed to continue the initiative. The related Principles of Access to BSIS Data and Dissemination of PSC Data following will be reconsidered following the completion of the trial phase.

The Committee adopted amendments to the Memorandum related to the withdrawal of ILO Protocol No. 147, with entry into force on 1 January 2027.

In support of enhanced environmental performance in shipping and in line with broader sustainability objectives, the Committee agreed to initiate the development of an environmental parameter within the Ship Risk Profile, including the introduction of an Environmental Deficiency Index for analytical purposes.

The Committee considered and adopted new guidelines for Stopping an Operation. In addition, it approved the amendments and revisions to several existing guidelines.

The Committee reviewed the progress achieved under the Strategic Plan 2021–2025 and adopted a new Strategic Plan for the period 2026–2030, taking into account emerging developments in the maritime sector

The Committee reaffirmed its commitment to combating substandard shipping and agreed to continue work on enforcement-related measures during the intersessional period. The Committee further agreed to enhance cooperation with other PSC regimes, including the Paris MoU, particularly with regard to dual-member States and coordination on enforcement actions.

The Committee addressed the increasing concern regarding ships operating under fraudulent flags, registries and/or certificates. It acknowledged recent developments within IMO, including the establishment of a dedicated webpage consolidating official communications on fraudulent registration and the adoption of Guidelines on the Registration of Ships by IMO LEG 113. In this context, the Committee agreed to strengthen the focus of inspections and to introduce additional measures within the Black Sea Information System (BSIS), including the assignment of Priority I inspection status to such vessels.

The Committee also agreed to publish a consolidated document on national port State control-related corruption reporting mechanisms on the Black Sea MoU public website.

On behalf of the member States, Capt. Hasandayioğlu, concluded the meeting by noting that significant progress made on the port State control issues during this meeting. He expressed his sincere appreciation to the Bulgarian Maritime Administration for its excellent organization and hospitality. He also extended thanks to all Member States, observers and the Secretariat for their ongoing commitment and cooperation.

The Committee elected Mr. Tsvetomir Nikolov, Director of the International and National Shipping Regulations Directorate of Bulgaria as Chair and Ms. Lacrima Horneț, Head of International Relations and Regulations Department of Romania as Vice Chair of the Committee.

The 27th meeting of the Port State Control Committee is tentatively scheduled to take place in Constanta, Romania in the second half of April 2027.

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Contact

Black Sea MoU Secretariat
Beylerbeyi Mah. Abdullahaga Cad. No.16A
Uskudar - İstanbul 34676 TÜRKİYE
Telephone: +90 216 342 5887
E-mail: secretariat@bsmou.org Website: www.bsmou.org