

## UNWTO Supports Regional Approach to Tourism Development in Europe

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Cooperation at the regional level has proven to be crucial for the development of a profitable and sustainable tourism sector, as a further building block of national tourism development strategies. Following examples of other sub-regions in the world, UNWTO support for regional tourism development was underscored at the European level at the 5th International Conference of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization on “Tourism Infrastructure Development in the Black Sea region” (6-8 October, Sochi, Russia).

The Conference seeks to further cooperation between the countries of the Black Sea region in areas such as tourism infrastructure and human resources development. With the official support of UNWTO, participants stressed the important contribution of an integrated tourism area to the effective development of the Black Sea region’s economy.

“UNWTO has long encouraged a regional approach to tourism development and fully supports the focus of this conference,” said UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai. “This regional initiative will prove decisive in harnessing the enormous tourism potential of the Black Sea region, thereby stimulating economic growth, development and job creation in the region”.

This move towards strengthen regional cooperation comes as tourism destinations recognize the importance of regional tourism initiatives for their effective positing on an increasingly competitive tourism market. Cross-border tourism products and activities can offer valuable opportunities for regions as a whole on the international marketplace, while also benefiting individual destinations both economically and socially.

The Black Sea tourism initiative follows a clear and growing trend in Europe towards regional tourism development. Examples include the Baltic Sea Region, the Scandinavian Countries, the Carpathian Region, the South Caucus Region and the Mediterranean.