



## Final Declaration of the 8<sup>th</sup> International Blue Black Sea Congress

Held on 8–9 May 2025 at the Faculty of Political Science, Marmara University

The International Blue Black Sea Congress, which has been regularly convened since 2008, aims to bring together researchers and policymakers working on the political, social, economic, cultural, and environmental issues of the Black Sea littoral and hinterland countries, as well as to discuss possible solutions and opportunities for cooperation. The eighth edition of the Congress was held on 8–9 May 2025. The valuable research-based presentations delivered during the Congress will be published as soon as possible.

This year, the Congress was organized around the themes of *Conflict Resolution, Sustainability, and Development*. Participants exchanged views on key regional issues such as peacebuilding, environmental protection, and economic cooperation. Throughout the event, current regional conditions, opportunities, future projections, potential risks, and corresponding solutions were comprehensively evaluated. Participants contributed constructively by offering concrete analyses and policy recommendations.

The papers presented at the Congress reveal the growing adoption of discourse analysis-based theoretical approaches in international security studies and show that security is increasingly conceptualized not only in military terms but also as a phenomenon constructed in economic, social, environmental, and political domains. The widespread use of these diverse dimensions of security highlights the rising significance of varied theoretical perspectives in the academic literature.

Notably, the participation of researchers and other stakeholders from outside Türkiye enriched the Congress by enabling the exchange of field-based experiences and academic perspectives on current global political and international affairs. This provided a solid platform for comprehensive information sharing and discussion.

Environmental issues, whose global threat dimension is steadily increasing, are becoming ever more critical for the Black Sea and its hinterland. Measures and cooperative policies for the shared policies in this sphere will help mitigate future challenges. Localizing regional environmental and climate policies in accordance with subregional and national conditions through collaboration will facilitate the problem-solving process. Especially, the urgent need to develop new strategies considering the security dimension of climate change was once again emphasized throughout the Congress.

Advancing the objectives of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), which brings together Black Sea and neighboring countries on an international platform, constitutes a great importance. Member states, especially Türkiye, should present greater commitment to this effort. Conflicts between neighboring countries, particularly the Russia-Ukraine War, seem to have constrained the effectiveness of the Organization. The intervention of non-regional global actors in such disputes has often led not to resolution but to deeper entrenchment of their presence and the perpetuation of unresolved conflicts. In light of this reality, we emphasize the importance of addressing regional issues primarily through bilateral relations or within the BSEC framework, supported by appropriate policies and institutionalization.





Considering the Black Sea Region's strategic geopolitical position between Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, the peace and stability of the area has a positive impact on global affairs. As globalization intensifies interdependence among nations, stability within the BSEC region becomes increasingly vital. The fact that the energy-rich countries lie predominantly to the east of the Black Sea and energy-importing countries to its west underscores the importance of cooperation and stability-oriented relations.

In the coming years, enhancing opportunities for scientific collaboration, supporting early-career researchers, and encouraging interdisciplinary work will ensure more productive environment for the future congresses. Including more topics related to historical background of the region will contribute to thematic depth for the future events. Research highlighting the political, economic, philosophical, literary, and cultural dimensions of the region will foster a better understanding of both local and universal values. Furthermore, open-access publication of Congress papers will accelerate the dissemination of scientific knowledge.

The 8<sup>th</sup> International Blue Black Sea Congress, which examined the region's multifaceted transformation -especially in the economic, social, and political domains- from an academic perspective, received hundreds of submissions from within and beyond Türkiye, with many selected and presented. This strong interest and engagement affirm the Congress's role as a vital hub for knowledge construction and exchange. At this juncture, the Congress serves an important function in bringing and developing new researchers to the academia.

We appreciate the dedication of the Congress organizing committee, particularly the students and other stakeholders. We eagerly anticipate future congresses that will continue to examine the challenges and cooperation opportunities of regional countries from both academic and political perspectives, with participants from diverse countries.

We extend our gratitude to the organizing committee members and to all contributors of the 8<sup>th</sup> International Blue Black Sea Congress. We look forward to future congresses and events that will strengthen the bonds of cooperation and solidarity among countries and contribute to the establishment of peace and stability in the region.

We also express our gratitude the sponsors of the Congress: The İstanbul Bosphorus Municipalities Union (İBBB), NETA Global, the Afro-Eurasia Research Institute, and the International Relations Club (IRC), as well as the Faculty of Political Science at Marmara University for hosting the event.

