

**JOINT STATEMENT OF THE NAVAL COMMANDERS OF
THE BLACK SEA LITTORAL STATES
ISTANBUL/ 8 APRIL 2011**

The Naval Commanders of the Black Sea littoral states gathered in Istanbul on 7-8 April 2011 to mark the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Agreement on the Establishment of the Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group (BLACKSEAFOR).

BLACKSEAFOR, working on the principle of consensus, represents the embodiment of the desire of the Black Sea littoral states to unite around the common goal of contributing to regional security and stability through cooperation among their naval forces. Being the first example of a multilateral regional formation in the naval field, BLACKSEAFOR has proven its value both as a confidence building mechanism and a platform for cooperation. It has gained international recognition as a prominent actor contributing to further strengthening friendship, good relations and mutual confidence in the Black Sea maritime domain.

Alongside BLACKSEAFOR, other complementary initiatives such as Confidence and Security Building Measures in the Naval Field, Black Sea Coast and Border Guards Cooperation Forum and Operation Black Sea Harmony have become good examples of littoral states cooperating to improve interoperability among naval forces and enhancing stability in the Black Sea.

Over the last 10 years, BLACKSEAFOR and the aforementioned mechanisms have also played a valuable role in consolidating regional ownership.

Building on the Montreux Convention as one of the primary cornerstones of maritime security and stability in the Black Sea, littoral states have a special responsibility in maintaining security in the maritime areas.

The Naval Commanders of the Black Sea littoral states are committed to working toward a secure and stable Black Sea by using the potential of existing naval mechanisms. They will be guided by regional priorities and based on complementarity and inclusiveness of efforts among all the Black Sea littoral states.

In the framework of the BLACKSEAFOR Agreement, littoral states also stand ready to cooperate with third states and relevant international organizations to contribute to both regional and global peace and stability.

Cognisant of the fact that peace and stability in the Black Sea is of continued importance, the Naval Commanders of the littoral states, on the occasion of their Istanbul gathering to mark the 10th Anniversary of the Agreement on the Establishment of the Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group, reaffirmed their strong desire and determination to unite efforts to further enhance and strengthen their cooperation within BLACKSEAFOR in order to carry it to a even more successful decade.