

# TREASURE

*The fascinating  
underwater museum  
of the Black Sea*

**PROJECT TITLE** **TREASURE Joint Cultural Heritage – Source for Development of Entrepreneurship in the Black Sea Basin**

**IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD** 18.09.2018 – 17.09.2020

**ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED** Constanta County Council (RO), Bulgarian Association for Transfer of Technology and Innovation (BG), District Government of Enez (TU), Ungheni District Council (MD)

**PROGRAMME** Black Sea Basin  
ENI CBC 2014-2020

**TOTAL BUDGET** 939.544,00 €



The project focuses on underwater archaeological research to preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the Black Sea Basin. It offers a unique experience as an alternative to traditional tourism. A sub-aquatic museum placed 2 km from the shore of Enez (Turkey) offers the possibility to dive 18 metres under the water and see the replicas of antique figures anchored where the original remains were found. Diving courses and underwater visits to the site are being organised. In Romania, data and visuals from artefacts located at the bottom of the sea have been collected to develop a 3D hologram with video footage that will be displayed in different museums. Other activities include the opening of a touristic centre in Moldova and the creation of a digital atlas.



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**CULTURE & EDUCATION**

**PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE  
COOPERATION**



*“We have underwater treasures in most of the countries participating in the project. The interest for these objects is high, these items are not easy to access: therefore, it is exciting to reach and visit them somehow, bringing attraction to the area.”*

Florentina Caramitru, representative of the lead partner organization, Constanta County Council (Romania)

Can underwater cultural heritage of the Black Sea Basin be preserved? Could this be turned into an opportunity to develop entrepreneurship in the cultural and touristic sectors? This is a bet that TREASURE aims to win: promoting and protecting underwater heritage, while spinning an economic opportunity out of it for Bulgaria, Romania, the Republic of Moldova and Turkey. Even creating an under-water museum to bring tourists down into the deep see to enjoy a visit.

The UNESCO 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage defines it as “all traces of human existence having cultural, historical or archaeological character which have been partially or totally under water, periodically or continuously, for at least 100 years”. We are talking about different items, from sites to artifacts, from vessels to statues, aircrafts and even human remains: the Convention embraces the concept of heritage as a common asset and encourages responsible public access, knowledge sharing, and public enjoyment.

This is what the TREASURE project – implemented by the ENI CBC Black Sea Basin Programme – is about: raising the touristic attractiveness of the region,

protecting and promoting subaquatic archaeological rests and offering a unique experience as an alternative to traditional tourism. The four partners behind TREASURE are aware of this and hence have joined efforts to unveil the sunken world under the water and to bring it closer to the most curious and intrepid visitors.

A clear example is the subaquatic museum in Enez (Turkey) located two kilometres away from the shore: the visitor has to dive eighteen metres deep to admire the replicas of a Nike goddess statue, of an antique lion figure or of the model of Ainos ancient town fortress, placed exactly where the original ones were found. The latter remain well protected in a museum, ready to be appreciated by the less intrepid visitors. To ease the access to the underwater wonders, diving courses and guided visits are being organised. Similarly, the Bulgarian partner – BATTI NGO – is offering diving courses, this time, to students of the local universities. “Our purpose is to encourage them to explore the sea and get to know our local heritage”, says Florentina Caramitru – from Constanta County Council.

With the same objective, the underwater archaeology unit of the National History

and Archaeology Museum (Romania) is collecting data and visuals from their findings in the sea bottom, and developing a 3D hologram and video footage that will be displayed in several museums. Thanks to the hologram projections, the artefacts that were found in the most inaccessible spots will be brought up to the surface and enjoyed by the general public. This happens in the autumn 2021.

In April 2021, the partners also completed the reconstruction of a three-stored Cultural and Sports Center in Enez. The Center hosts non-governmental organisations and small and medium size enterprises that promote sports and culture both for tourists and locals. In not even one month, around 150 people have already taken part in the activities, from water sports like diving, sea skiing or canoeing to pilates and fitness, to music and painting workshops. The Centre is very active, bringing new life from all-comers to the area.

Due to the pandemic outbreak, activities had to slow down and the project has received an extension until late 2021, when it will finalise with the creation of a digital atlas, showing the underwater spots scattered throughout the area and the most interesting places in the four partner countries. In short, the positive changes brought to communities on all sides of the basin thanks to the project, pursue the preservation of the underwater treasures, and the development of the touristic potential of the Black Sea, impacting on the economic growth of the region. “If the area becomes more attractive – say Florentina – tour operators, transport agencies, museums, restaurant, hotels will also be able to profit”.

