

**20-21 September, Third International Conference “Black Sea Cruise 2012”
(Odessa, Bristol Hotel)**

The organizers of the event are State Enterprise “Odessa Commercial Sea Port”, the Association of the Mediterranean Cruise Ports “MedCruise” and the Association of the Black and Azov Sea Ports BASPA.

The Cruise Summit was attended by 125 participants from 16 countries, among them were representatives of 5 global cruise lines (*Royal Caribbean Cruises, Carnival UK, Pullmantur Cruceros, Sea Dream Yacht Club, TUI Cruises*), authoritative expert of cruise industry Peter Wild (Great Britain), leading specialists of world-known cruise publications *Seatrade* and *Cruise Business Review*, administrations of 12 Black Sea ports, port executives of Greece, Slovenia, Croatia, Montenegro, state authorities and municipalities of the Black Sea region, Consulates and many others.

During the first conference day (20 September, 2012) there was a *Working Meeting* of the participants of the Marketing Project *Cruise Black Sea*.

Working sessions of the conference took place on 21, September, 2012. All delegates were greeted and encouraged by the Honored Guests of the event: Elena Shapovalova, Chairman of the State Agency of Ukraine for Tourism and Resorts, Tatiana Markova, Head of Culture and Tourism Department of the Odessa City Council and Yuriy Vaskov, General Manager of the State Enterprise “Odessa Commercial Sea Port”.

The conference agenda covered the work of three sessions, B2B meetings (21 companies from 9 countries) and press conference.

In the course of the speakers’ presentations it was emphasized that the Black Sea region is one of the most perspective in terms of cruise shipping, and not only due to its unique cultural and historical heritage but also from a purely economic point of view. In his report Peter Wild said that small distances between the Black Sea ports allow vessels to save fuel and improve its profitability that is very important nowadays. Besides, the expert added that Sevastopol has the highest historical potential which is to be explored by tourists. At the same time, Odessa, having the most favorable location towards the biggest tourist centers of Europe and Russia, is most likely to become a home cruise port of the region.

A Law on Sea Ports, recently adopted in Ukraine, has also become the subject of discussion during the sessions. According to one of the speakers – Yuriy Vaskov - leading cruise operators have obtained a real prospect of creation their

own shore infrastructure in the Ukrainian Black Sea ports. According to General Manager of Odessa port, concession provided by law, being one of the main forms of public-private partnership (PPP), gives foreign companies opportunity to settle on the Ukrainian cruise market. He informed that by the end of the current year the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine will have prepared tender for the concession of passenger terminals in the ports of Yalta and Sevastopol and encouraged the representatives of cruise lines to apply for the participation in the tenders. Analyzing factors which can convert the Black Sea region into one of the most attractive cruise destinations in Europe, Y.Vaskov focused on construction of new berths which can accommodate vessels up to 300 meters long and new airports. It was also mentioned that for the past few years the specified destinations has made a significant progress. Cruise terminals in Russian port of Sochi and Bulgarian port of Burgas are being under construction now, reconstruction of the terminal in Georgian Batumi is due to start by the end of the year. The absence of the modern airport in Odessa, the main problem of cruise business development in the city, has started being solved this year. According to Y.Vaskov, the government of Ukraine has made a fundamental decision to start construction of a new airport in Odessa. The facility is to be put into operation in two years.

During the third conference day – 22 September, 2012 – the representatives of cruise lines, port authorities of the Eastern Mediterranean region took part in the city tour, including visit of passenger terminal of Odessa Port, Odessa Opera House and a few museums.