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PRESS RELEASE

Presentation of Tbilisi Experiential Tourism HUB

On January 31st 2022, a presentation and opening of Tbilisi Experiential Tourism HUB – **TETH** was hosted by Georgian Arts and Culture Centre **GACC** within the frames of the project **PRO EXTOUR: Promoting Heritage and Culture-based Experiential Tourism in the Black Sea Basin**. The opening was held in an online format due to pandemic and safety measures. The project is being carried out within the frames of Joint Operational Programme Black Sea Basin (**BSB**) of EU, which is co-funded by The European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) and partner organizations - Varna University of Management (Bulgaria), Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, City_Space_Flux Research Unit (Greece), Georgian Arts and Culture Centre (Georgia), Yerevan State University (Armenia) and Culinary Arts and Hospitality Association (Bulgaria).

As part of **PRO EXTOUR** and under the supervision of the partner organizations a cross-border network of Black Sea Hubs on Experiential Tourism was established. The core directions of the hubs' work are: conducting research and experimenting, mapping and presentation of heritage and culture-based activities and events in the BSB, maintaining a cross-border network and collaborating, sharing practices, organizing training and mentoring. The hubs are equipped with technical facilities that are essential for maintaining and managing libraries and online repository during the project.

The event was attended by the representatives of National Tourism Administration and academic institutions of Georgia, who discussed the development opportunities and challenges of culture and heritage-based experiential tourism in the country.

The event was opened with a welcome speech by Maka Dvalishvili, Director of Georgian Arts and Culture Centre. Lela Khartishvili, Tourism Expert, introduced the works carried out within the frames of project **PRO EXTOUR 1145** and talked about the importance of development of heritage and culture-based experiential tourism in the country and its integration in the study programs at higher institutions.

Nana Kartvelishvili, Tourism Manager at GACC, presented ongoing projects of the HUB and talked about cooperation opportunities with the educational institutions in detail.

The meeting was held in an interactive form, a discussion took place on the topic of experiential tourism terminology. The parties agreed to cooperate and promote student engagement.

Common borders. Common solutions.