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## **GMF Announces Creation of Black Sea Trust**

*~ Public-private grantmaking initiative will promote democracy consolidation, civil society development in Black Sea region ~*

**BUCHAREST, Romania (June 5, 2006)** — The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) announces today the creation of the Black Sea Trust, a long-term, multimillion dollar initiative that would provide grants to support the consolidation of democracy, regional cooperation on civil society development, and support of good governance in the Black Sea region. GMF anticipates launching operations of the Black Sea Trust in the fall of 2006. GMF is in advanced negotiations with a number of potential partners including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Romanian government, and other private and public donors from Europe and the United States. GMF anticipates cash and in-kind commitments totaling more than \$20 million at the time of the Black Sea Trust's launch, and growth of the Trust's funding to more than \$40 million over its lifetime.

"The Black Sea region is critical to ensuring the long-term stability, security, and peace of Europe, the United States, and the transatlantic alliance," said GMF President Craig Kennedy. "The Black Sea Trust will do its part to help ensure that the region progresses on local, national, and international levels."

The concept of the Black Sea Trust has been consistently supported by the leadership of the Romanian Foreign Ministry as well as within the U.S. government beginning with initial discussions in 2002 among GMF, USAID, and the Romanian Foreign Ministry and continuing with intense dialogue on the subject over the last few months. In the past year, Romanian President Traian Basescu's forceful advocacy for the strategic importance of the Black Sea region was key to moving the Black Sea Trust from concept to operation in a short period of time.

GMF, USAID, and the Mott Foundation have joined forces before, creating in 2003 the award-winning Balkan Trust for Democracy (BTD), a \$30-million fund that has given out millions in grant money toward promoting regional cooperation and reconciliation, civil society development, and democracy-building ideas and institutions throughout the Balkans. BTD has successfully grown and added new partners after its founding, a process the Black Sea Trust will emulate.

GMF is in advanced negotiations with the Romanian government about basing the Trust's operations in Bucharest. GMF will staff the Trust, which will provide grants to indigenous organizations — including civic groups and NGOs, local and regional governments, educational institutions, and media — in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey, and

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Ukraine. Approximately \$2 million in rolling grants will be given out each year. Individual grants would range from \$1,000 to \$75,000 with an average size around \$15,000 or \$20,000, and will be approved monthly by a grantmaking committee that will include GMF representatives and one representative from each of the donors to the Trust. Programmatic strategy will be provided by an Advisory Committee, which will be comprised of representatives from each of the countries of the region and other international experts.

Grants will be awarded within two programs:

- Civic Participation— grants to local and national organizations working to improve democracy, rule of law, citizen engagement with government, monitoring of government performance, and improving citizen understanding of their rights and responsibilities.
- Cross-Border Cooperation — grants intended to encourage public, private, and non-profit elites to develop programs that promote regional cooperation and stability. These grants support sub-national and trans-border collaboration among governments, NGOs, civic initiatives, and other institutions working to improve understanding, and cooperation throughout the region.

The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) is a nonpartisan American public policy and grantmaking institution dedicated to promoting greater cooperation and understanding between the United States and Europe. GMF does this by supporting individuals and institutions working on transatlantic issues, by convening leaders to discuss the most pressing transatlantic themes, and by examining ways in which transatlantic cooperation can address a variety of global policy challenges. In addition, GMF supports a number of initiatives to strengthen democracies. Founded in 1972 through a gift from Germany as a permanent memorial to Marshall Plan assistance, GMF maintains a strong presence on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition to its headquarters in Washington, DC, GMF has six offices in Europe: Berlin, Bratislava, Paris, Brussels, Belgrade, and Ankara.

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