



ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Permanent International Secretariat

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**REPORT
OF THE JOINT MEETING
OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUPS
ON CULTURE AND ON COOPERATION IN TOURISM**

BSEC Headquarters, 26 November 2019

1. The Joint Meeting of the BSEC Working Groups on Culture and on Cooperation in Tourism was held at the BSEC Headquarters, on 26 November 2019.
2. The Joint Meeting was chaired by Ms. Dr. Panagiota DIONYSOPOULOU, General Director of Tourism Policy, the Ministry of Tourism of the Hellenic Republic.
3. Opening remarks were made by Mr. Konstantinos LOULIS, Secretary General of the Ministry of Tourism of the Hellenic Republic (attached as **Annex I**), and the BSEC Secretary General Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES.
4. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the following BSEC Member States:
 - Republic of Armenia
 - Republic of Azerbaijan
 - Republic of Bulgaria
 - Georgia
 - Hellenic Republic
 - Republic of Moldova
 - Romania
 - Russian Federation
 - Republic of Serbia
 - Republic of Turkey
 - Ukraine
5. The representative of the Parliamentary Assembly of BSEC (PABSEC) attended the meeting as the BSEC Related Body.
6. The representatives of Hungary and the United States of America attended the meeting as the BSEC Observers.
7. The representative of the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) attended the meeting as the BSEC Sectoral Dialogue Partner.

8. The representatives of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Secretariat, the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe, the International Transcoastal Executive Committee Black Sea Cuisine (BSC ITEC) and the European Historic Cafés Association EHICA (Crete, the Hellenic Republic) attended the meeting as Guests.

9. The List of Participants of the Meeting is attached as **Annex II**.

AGENDA ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

10. The Draft Agenda of the Meeting was discussed, amended and adopted. The Agenda, as adopted, is attached as **Annex III**.

AGENDA ITEM 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BSEC COUNCIL, AND THE FOLLOW-UP OF THE DECLARATIONS AND JOINT STATEMENTS ADOPTED BY THE MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF CULTURE AND TOURISM OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

11. The BSEC PERMIS informed on the implementation of the Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations of the BSEC Council and the follow up of the Declarations and the Statements of the Ministers in charge of Culture and Tourism since the last Joint Meeting of the Working Groups on Culture and on Cooperation in Tourism (Sochi, 22 June 2016).

AGENDA ITEM 3: CULTURAL ROUTES – CULTURAL TOURISM PROJECTS

a. Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe – 9th Annual Advisory Forum (Sibiu, 2-5 October 2019)

12. The participants took note of the information provided by the BSEC PERMIS regarding the participation in the 9th Annual Advisory Forum on the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe that was held in Sibiu (Romania) on 2-5 October 2019.

13. The representative of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Secretariat delivered a presentation on the Council of Europe Cultural Routes Programme and encouraged the BSEC Member States to participate. The EPA certification criteria and evaluation cycle for “*Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe*” were also explained. The presentation is attached as **Annex IV**.

14. The same representative suggested to the BSEC Member States to consider preparing a Cultural Routes Regional Black Sea Mapping Report, including the potentials and opportunities for the cultural/tourism route mapping of the wider Black Sea Region, and indicated the procedure to be followed.

15. The delegation of the Hellenic Republic briefed on the activities undertaken in connection with the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, highlighting the cultural, educational and tourism objectives of cooperation, as well as promoting understanding and respect for European values. The presentation is attached as **Annex V**. In addition, the same delegation presented the latest developments with regard to the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR).

16. The Founder and President of EHICA (Crete, Greece) informed the participants on the 10th Annual Advisory Forum of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe 2020 that will take place in Chania on 7-9 October 2020. The same participant also presented the European

Historic Cafés Association and its efforts to promote the route of historic cafes as a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe. The presentation is attached as **Annex VI**.

17. The delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan informed on the *International Summer Music Festival* that will take place in Sheki Historical Centre in Azerbaijan in 2020, and invited BSEC Member States to participate.

18. The delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria informed on the newly elaborated cultural and historic destinations in Bulgaria, underlining the *Valley of the Roses* and the *Thracian Kings* with a view to invite the BSEC Member States to joining it.

b. UNWTO Silk Road Initiative

19. The representative of the UNWTO informed on the latest developments with regard to the activities in the framework of the Silk Road Initiative and delivered a presentation on “Capitalising on the potential of the Silk Road within the wider Black Sea Area” a joint initiative of the Ministry of Tourism of the Hellenic Republic, Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria and the UNWTO Technical Cooperation and Silk Road Department, with a view to exploring possibilities for other BSEC Member States to joining it. The presentation is attached as **Annex VII**. Efforts will be undertaken in order to find the necessary financing for the implementation of this project.

20. The delegation of the Hellenic Republic delivered a presentation on the “*National Strategy and the UNWTO Silk Road Initiative*” to the participants. The presentation is attached as **Annex VIII**.

21. The delegation of the Republic of Turkey informed on the forthcoming *International Conference on the Silk Road and Economic Cooperation* that will be organized by the Grand National Assembly of the Republic of Turkey in cooperation with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and Silk Road Support Group in Istanbul on 8-10 April 2020.

22. The BSEC PERMIS reiterated that interested BSEC Member States should take the lead in order to elaborate concrete proposals on transnational maritime itineraries in the Region, to be presented within the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Project and also to contribute to the Western Silk Road Tourism Development Initiative, as well as the Western Silk Road Heritage Map within the UNWTO Silk Road Programme.

c. Mapping of the Byzantine Routes in the BSEC Member States

23. The BSEC PERMIS informed on the state of affairs with regard to the submission of the relevant contributions by BSEC Member States.

24. The participants discussed the Mapping on Byzantine Routes in the BSEC Member States with a view to jointly agree on the next steps to be taken. The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General proposed to explore possibilities of mapping the “*Byzantine Routes in the BSEC Member States*” in the context of the Council of Europe Cultural Routes.

25. The delegation of the Republic of Armenia, the Hellenic Republic and the Republic of Serbia supported the above proposal. The idea of creating a relevant brochure was also discussed.

26. The delegation of the Russian Federation expressed their interest in joining the project.

27. The representative of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports informed about the Greek Byzantine archaeological sites on the World Heritage List.

28. The interested Member States proposed to continue the consideration of the issue at the next meeting of the Working Group on Culture.

AGENDA ITEM 4: COOPERATION WITH UNWTO

29. The BSEC PERMIS and the representative of the UNWTO provided updated information on the cooperation between the two Organizations. Possible future actions with regard to the cooperation were also discussed.

30. The delegation of the Republic of Turkey informed on the results of the “*Seminar on Prospect for Increased Chinese Tourism to the BSEC Region*”, jointly organized with the BSEC PERMIS and the UNWTO that was held in Istanbul on 14 May 2019.

AGENDA ITEM 5: BLACK SEA CUISINE – DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION PROGRAM

31. The representative of the Black Sea Cuisine International Transcoastal Executive Committee presented the updates on the developments of the “*Black Sea Cuisine – Development and Promotion Program*”, whose start-up was co-funded by the Black Sea Project Promotion Facility (BSPPF). The initiators invited the interested BSEC Member States to participate in this project. The presentation is attached as **Annex IX**.

32. The BSEC PERMIS reiterated its suggestion to the representatives of the above Program to participate in the World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism, which will be held in Bruges (Belgium) on 1-3 June 2020, with the aim of introducing the Project and promoting the Black Sea Cuisine brand to the wider audience.

33. The idea of presenting this project in the context of cultural gastronomic routes was also discussed.

AGENDA ITEM 6: FILM-INDUCED TOURISM

34. The representative of the Hellenic Republic presented the information prepared by the National Center of Audio-visual Media and Communication (ECOME SA) concerning the Film-induced Tourism in the Hellenic Republic.

35. Upon the proposal of the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, the participants have agreed to consider establishing a loose network of state/private agencies promoting the attraction of foreign film productions in the BSEC Member States and kindly requested the Hellenic Republic to prepare the first list before the next meeting of the Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism.

AGENDA ITEM 7: PARTICIPATION IN FILM FESTIVALS

36. The BSEC PERMIS reiterated its call to the Member States to use the frame of their respective international festivals and to introduce in them, if possible, a dedicated BSEC section. It was concluded that different festivals and targeted events represent a good platform to promote the BSEC Region and enhance the Organization’s visibility.

37. The representative of the Republic of Moldova underlined the importance of cooperation between the different film festivals in the BSEC Member States within the EU program “Creative Europe”.

38. The delegation of the Republic of Armenia informed about the forthcoming festival “*Golden Apricot International Film Festival*” that will take place in July 2020 in Yerevan and proposed to BSEC Member States to participate.

39. The representatives of the International Transcoastal Executive Committee Black Sea Cuisine (BSC ITEC) informed that the “*Black Sea Cuisine – Development and Promotion Program*” movie won the gold medal in the category of the tourism development at an International Film Festival recently held in Sofia. More information will be duly provided.

AGENDA ITEM 8: TOURISM EVENTS AND FAIRS IN BSEC MEMBER STATES

40. The BSEC PERMIS reiterated its appeal to all Member States to explore ways so that in the most important tourism fairs and exhibitions organized by the relevant state agencies, a small space/stand could be offered to PERMIS free of charge in order to present the Black Sea Region as an “all-in-one” attractive tourism destination.

41. The delegation of the Republic of Armenia informed on the 7th International Tourism Exhibition “*In Tour Expo*”, to be held in Yerevan on 10-12 April 2020, underlining that a stand free of charge would be offered to the BSEC PERMIS, as well as space for stands and booths for the BSEC Member States at special discounted rates. The information brochure on the said exhibition is attached as **Annex X**.

42. The delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria informed on the forthcoming 2nd edition of *Investing in Tourism Sustainability Conference*, to be held in Sunny Beach, Bulgaria, in the second half of May 2020, and invited the BSEC Member States to consider their participation.

AGENDA ITEM 9: PREPARATION OF A REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE FROM THE BSEC MEMBER STATES THAT COULD BE JOINTLY NOMINATED FOR INSCRIPTION IN THE UNESCO REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY

43. The participants took note of the information presented by the BSEC PERMIS and the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO concerning a representative list of intangible cultural heritage from the BSEC Member States, which could be jointly nominated in the relevant UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

44. The BSEC PERMIS kindly asked the Member States to send their respective national lists of intangible cultural heritage to the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe in Sofia with a view to explore possibilities of selecting common items that can be jointly nominated in the relevant UNESCO list.

45. The delegation of the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports called upon the BSEC Member States to join the inscription of the art drystone walling element which has already been inscribed in the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

46. The participants decided to continue discussion of this item at the next meeting of the Working Group on Culture.

AGENDA ITEM 10: UPDATING THE LIST OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE BSEC MEMBER STATES TO THE BSEC WORKING GROUP ON CULTURE AND THE WORKING GROUP ON COOPERATION IN TOURISM

47. The Member States were requested to update the list containing the coordinates of their respective focal points in charge of Culture and Tourism (attached as **Annex XI**) in order to facilitate a direct communication between the BSEC PERMIS and the relevant Ministries.

AGENDA ITEM 11: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

48. No discussion was held under this agenda item.

AGENDA ITEM 12: ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

49. The participants adopted the present Report and submitted it for consideration to the next Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials of the BSEC Member States.