



ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Permanent International Secretariat

BS/WG/C/R(2024)2

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP ON CULTURE

Online, 11 December 2024

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Culture was held online on 11 December 2024.
2. The Meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Nairi PETROSSIAN, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Armenia to the Organization of BSEC, the representative of the Armenian BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office and by Ms. Astghik MARABYAN, Head of the Department of Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of the Republic of Armenia.
3. Opening Remarks were made by:
 - Mr. Nairi PETROSSIAN, on behalf of the Armenian BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office;
 - Ms. Astghik MARABYAN, on behalf of the Country-Coordinator of the Working Group.
4. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the following BSEC Member States:
 - Republic of Armenia
 - Republic of Azerbaijan
 - Georgia
 - Hellenic Republic
 - Republic of Moldova
 - Republic of North Macedonia
 - Romania
 - Russian Federation
 - Republic of Türkiye
 - Ukraine
5. The representative of the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) attended the meeting as the BSEC Related Body.
6. The representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt attended the meeting as the BSEC Observer.

7. The representative of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) attended the meeting as the BSEC Sectoral Dialogue Partner.
8. The List of Participants is attached as **Annex I** to the present Report.

AGENDA ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

9. The Draft Agenda of the Meeting was discussed and adopted. The Agenda, as adopted, is attached as **Annex II**.

AGENDA ITEM 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UPDATED BSEC ECONOMIC AGENDA “TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE OF THE WIDER BLACK SEA AREA”

10. The Working Group took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the importance of the implementation of the BSEC Economic Agenda, more precisely the relevant provisions listed in *GOAL 8: Development of Tourism, Protection of Cultural Heritage and Promotion of Modern Culture*, as a platform for a more productive, effective and constructive cooperation for achieving tangible results.

11. In this context, BSEC PERMIS encouraged the participants to elaborate on possible project proposals and/or initiatives for collaboration and joint actions in line with the updated BSEC Economic Agenda.

12. Furthermore, the BSEC PERMIS briefed regarding the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General participation in the Annual Statutory Meeting of the Governing Board of the *Enlarged Partial Agreement* (EPA) on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in Luxembourg on 21-22 May 2024, and on the participation of the PERMIS representative in the *Iter Vitis* Conference Wine and Cultural Tourism: Fostering Economic Sustainability and Cultural Diplomacy Across Europe, held on 18-19 October 2024 in Chisinau (Republic of Moldova). In this regard, and building up on the potential and diversity of the cultural offer of the wider Black Sea region, the participants were invited to explore prospects for further actions within the BSEC Working Group.

AGENDA ITEM 3: CONSIDERATION OF THE ACTION PLAN FOR THE PERIOD OF 1 JULY 2023 – 30 JUNE 2025 DEVELOPED BY THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE, CULTURE AND SPORTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA, THE CURRENT COUNTRY-COORDINATOR OF THE WORKING GROUP

13. The Working Group finalized the adoption of the Plan of Action of the Working Group on Culture for the period 1 July 2023 - 30 June 2025. The Action Plan, as approved by the Working Group, is attached as **Annex III**.

14. The Working Group expressed its appreciation for the work of the Country-Coordinator in the preparation of the above-mentioned document and the organization of the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 4: ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED BY THE COUNTRY-COORDINATOR DURING THE PERIOD OF ITS COORDINATORSHIP

15. Under this Agenda item, the representative of the Country-Coordinator presented the outcomes of the III International Crafts Festival, which was held on 14-15 September 2024 in the Vayots Dzor Region (Republic of Armenia).

16. Additionally, the Country-Coordinator elaborated on its proposal for the establishment of professional networks of the intangible cultural heritage experts and heritage restorers and called on Member States to consider designating their representatives in the above-mentioned networks and inform the Country-Coordinator thereof. The relevant Verbal Note is attached as **Annex IV**.

17. In this context, the delegations of the Hellenic Republic and the Russian Federation, while expressing their readiness to contribute to the initiatives, shared their experiences on the matter.

18. It was also emphasized that pursuing further work on the above-mentioned initiatives will appropriately reflect the relevant provisions of the BSEC Economic Agenda, while contributing to facilitating the exchange of knowledge and experiences among Member States.

AGENDA ITEM 5: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND COLLABORATION IN THE FIELD OF CULTURE IN THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

19. In this framework, the participants exchanged information on the national experiences and activities carried out in their countries, including various projects and events that have been implemented around a wide range of issues in the field of culture.

20. During the debates, the following delegations made statements/presentations: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russian Federation, and Ukraine, thus sharing their views and insights on the matter.

21. Further on, the Member States and partner organizations were invited to communicate to the BSEC PERMIS their proposals to the BSEC Calendar of Events activities for the first semester of the year 2025.

22. Taking into account the above, and recognizing the importance of joint efforts to reinforce and further expand regional cooperation, the Working Group decided to continue the practice of sharing views on the matter.

AGENDA ITEM 6: COOPERATION WITH REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PARTNERS

23. The representative of the *International Centre for Black Sea Studies* (ICBSS) informed the Working Group regarding relevant ICBSS's activities and provided more details about the "8th BSEC Month of Culture", online program organized during November 2024.

24. The Working Group expressed its appreciation to the ICBSS for implementing the above-mentioned valuable initiative and highlighted its importance for further promoting the cultural assets of the region.

AGENDA ITEM 7: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

25. No discussion was held under this agenda item.

AGENDA ITEM 8: ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

26. The Working Group on Culture adopted the present Report for its submission to the next Meeting of the BSEC Committee of Senior Officials.