



ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Permanent International Secretariat

BS/WG/ED/R(2025)2

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP ON EDUCATION

9 December 2025, online

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Education was held online on 9 December 2025.

2. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Panagiotis PASSAS, Director-General of International and European Affairs, Education of the Hellenic Diaspora and Intercultural Education, Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports of the Hellenic Republic.

3. Opening Remarks were made by:

Mrs. Rositsa STOEVA, National Coordinator of the Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-Office of BSEC, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria on behalf of the Bulgarian BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office;

Ambassador Dimitrios RALLIS, Deputy Secretary General of BSEC PERMIS on behalf of the Secretariat;

Mr. Panagiotis PASSAS, on behalf of the Country-Coordinator of the Working Group.

4. The Meeting was attended by representatives from 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 Türkiye
Ukraine

5. The representative of the Parliamentary Assembly of BSEC (PABSEC) attended the meeting as the BSEC Related Body.

6. The representative of the Black Sea Universities Network (BSUN) attended the meeting as the BSEC Sectoral Dialogue Partner.

7. The List of Participants of the Meeting is attached as **Annex I**.

AGENDA ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

8. 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”

9. The Working Group took note of the information provided by the Secretariat regarding the state of affairs in the implementation of the BSEC Economic Agenda, in particular the relevant provisions under *Goal 14: Higher Standard in Education and Training*.

10. The BSEC PERMIS welcomed the written contributions submitted by the Member States outlining relevant national objectives and policies, which will serve as a basis for enhanced cooperation within the Working Group and for the preparation of the Implementation Report on the fulfilment of the aforementioned provisions of the updated Economic Agenda.

11. In the same context, the Chair, on behalf of the Country-Coordinator of the BSEC Working Group on Education, presented a detailed overview and assessment of the last two-year Coordination period. This period, which coincided with the commencement of the implementation of the updated BSEC Economic Agenda, significantly shaped the priorities and guided the strategic approach to all activities undertaken within the Working Group.

12. In this respect, the Working Group expressed its appreciation for the overall work carried out by the delegation of the Hellenic Republic during its Coordination period.

AGENDA ITEM 3: CURRENT STATUS AND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS OF STUDENT AND TEACHER SKILLS IN THE BSEC COUNTRIES

13. The discussion under this Agenda Item provided an overview of key educational trends, with particular emphasis on the development of student and teacher competencies. It was noted that education systems are at a critical juncture shaped by digital transformation, demographic shifts, and evolving labour market demands, making the strengthening of both student and teacher skills increasingly vital.

14. Reflecting on ongoing reforms within their respective educational systems, the representatives of the Hellenic Republic, Romania, and the Republic of Türkiye underlined the importance of modernising curricula, enhancing digital competencies, supporting teachers through continuous professional development, and reinforcing the link between education and labour market needs. The overarching aim is to build inclusive, resilient, and future-oriented education systems capable of equipping learners with the skills required in a rapidly changing environment.

AGENDA ITEM 4: EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND EXPERIENCE-SHARING REGARDING NATIONAL PRACTICES IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION IN THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

15. The participants held an extensive exchange on recent national developments in the field of education, presenting good practices, experiences, and priority areas. The delegations of the Hellenic Republic, Romania, and the Republic of Türkiye took the floor under this Agenda Item.

16. The representative of the Hellenic Republic highlighted comprehensive reforms across all education levels, including a shift to student-centred, outcome-based curricula, updates to 166 subjects, and the introduction of soft skills labs and courses in robotics, AI, and advanced digital skills. Additional measures include the expansion of all-day primary schools, the introduction of IB programmes, extending compulsory education to 14 years, adding English in preschool, supporting vulnerable learners, strengthening quality assurance and teacher development, addressing school bullying, modernising vocational education, and advancing higher education reforms such as establishing non-state universities and enhancing internationalisation.

17. The representative of the Republic of Türkiye reported on reforms focused on skills-based education, modernised assessment systems, and innovative foreign language teaching, supporting students' academic, social-emotional, and language development. Emphasis was placed on early and intensive language learning, enhanced digital and pedagogical competencies for teachers, and strengthened cooperation with public institutions, local authorities, and the private sector to better align education with labour market needs. The delegation also reiterated strong support for institutional cooperation, joint projects, and expert exchanges within BSEC.

18. The delegation of Romania informed the Working Group of broad reforms aimed at strengthening equity, inclusion, and quality in education. Key measures include reducing dropout in high-risk schools, introducing new remedial and assessment programmes in primary education, improving functional literacy, and expanding competency-based curricula. Investments in digital equipment, STEM labs, and teacher digital skills are advancing modernisation efforts. In vocational education, Romania is aligning programmes with labour market needs and transitioning to a dual VET system by 2029–2030, supported by new regional campuses. All reforms are guided by a strong commitment to equitable education for all learners. The same delegation also announced that the 2027 European Higher Education Area (EHEA) Ministerial Conference and Global Policy Forum will be held in Iași-Chișinău, with a “save-the-date” message to be circulated to stakeholders and the Ministries of Education and Research in January 2026.

AGENDA ITEM 5: CONSIDERATION OF REGIONAL COOPERATION INITIATIVES ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EDUCATION

19. The delegation of the Republic of Türkiye reiterated its strong support for deepening regional cooperation on AI in education through joint projects, expert exchanges, and further presentations. It emphasized the importance of developing joint AI ethics guidelines, shared digital competence frameworks, and exchanging good practices among BSEC Member States.

20. The participants discussed possible approaches for addressing Artificial Intelligence within the Working Group, including maintaining AI as a standing agenda item, organizing a dedicated webinar or workshop led by Türkiye, or establishing a Task Force supported by a concept paper and terms of reference. It was agreed that the Secretariat would continue close consultations with the delegation of the Republic of Türkiye on this matter.

21. The representative of the Russian Federation presented national initiatives on AI in higher education, highlighting significant investments in digital transformation, the creation of new AI degree programmes, large-scale training for students and teachers, and the development of advanced engineering schools equipped with modern digital technologies.

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

22. The representative of the Parliamentary Assembly of BSEC (PABSEC) provided information on the current and upcoming activities of the relevant PABSEC Committees. In this context, particular attention was drawn to the PABSEC Report and Recommendation on “*Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development in the BSEC Region: Social Aspects*”.

AGENDA ITEM 7: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

23. The Secretariat informed the Working Group of the Republic of Türkiye’s willingness to assume the Country-Coordinatorship of the Working Group on Education for the upcoming coordination cycle, as communicated to the BSEC PERMIS.

24. The participants expressed appreciation for the Coordinator’s leadership, dedication, and sustained efforts in fostering motivation, constructive dialogue, and effective coordination. They emphasized the importance of ensuring continuity with the incoming Coordinator and affirmed their readiness to support the future work of the Working Group.

25. The delegation of the Hellenic Republic, in its capacity as Country-Coordinator, thanked all Member States for their cooperation and positive spirit, as well as the Secretariat for their goodwill and constructive engagement throughout the coordination period.

AGENDA ITEM 8: ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

26. The Working Group adopted the Report of the Meeting to be submitted to the next Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials.