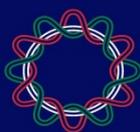


News from the Black Sea

Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation

Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS)

BSEC



SEA OF OPPORTUNITIES

BULGARIAN
CHAIRMANSHIP-IN-OFFICE
1 JAN – 30 JUN 2019

The Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-Office got officially underway during the “*Coordination Meeting of the BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office, the BSEC Committee of Senior Officials, the BSEC Related Bodies and the BSEC PERMIS*” held at the BSEC Headquarters, on 22 January 2019.

H.E. Ms. Emilia Krалеva, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, presented the Priorities of the Chairmanship to the participants of the above-mentioned meeting.

The Deputy Minister underlined that under the motto “*Sea of Opportunities*”, the Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-Office sets as its priorities the further development of BSEC as a project-oriented organization; the continuation of the processes of reform and adaptation of the organization to the contemporary challenges; the promotion of the meaningful interaction with the EU.

For more information on the priorities, please refer to the “*Priorities of the Chairmanship*” on the following link: <http://www.bsec-organization.org/chairmanship>

She further stated that Bulgaria will lay particular emphasis on the project-oriented approach towards regional cooperation, while the priority areas of sectoral cooperation during the Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-Office will be culture, transport, and environmental protection.

Participants expressed their appreciation to the outgoing Azeri Chairmanship-in-Office and wished the Bulgarian Chairmanship all the best for the forthcoming six months.

As the BSEC Secretary General said, PERMIS will spare no effort to transform the “*sea of opportunities*” into an “*ocean of achievements*” at the end of the Bulgarian Chairmanship.





A signing ceremony of the “Amending Protocol to the Host Country Agreement between the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and the Government of the Republic of Turkey for the International Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC)” took place at the BSEC Headquarters on 22 January 2019.

The said Agreement signed on behalf of the Republic of Turkey by H.E. Ambassador Faruk Kaymakci, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs and on behalf of BSEC by Ambassador Michael B. Christides, Secretary General of BSEC PERMIS finalizes the relocation process of the PABSEC International Secretariat to its new Premises in Istanbul.

The BSEC Region attracts the interest of faraway countries.



H.E. Mr. Chris Cooter, Ambassador of Canada to Turkey, paid a visit to the BSEC Headquarters on 8 January 2019, where he was briefed on the activities of the Organization by the PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. Christides and the First Deputy Secretary General, Ambassador Selim Yenel.

A thorough exchange of views took place on the prospects of establishing cooperation relations between BSEC and the Government of Canada; both sides agreed to continue consultations with a view to identifying ground for joint activities of mutual benefit.

The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, H.E. Mr. Alexander PANKIN and his Delegation paid a working visit to the BSEC Headquarters on 25 February 2019.

The main topics discussed during his visit related to the activities of BSEC, the organization by PERMIS of many new initiatives/projects in various sectors by attracting new sources of funding, as well as its participation in several international fora, aiming to increase the visibility of BSEC.

Minister Pankin noted that securing concrete deliverables required a target-based approach in the short to medium term planning of the BSEC activities and encouraged PERMIS to focus its efforts on the promotion of fewer, yet emblematic for the Organization, objectives.

Further issues, such as cooperation of BSEC with other international organizations, the possibilities for creating greater thematic focus at the BSEC high level (Ministerial) meetings and the activity of the *Black Sea Project Promotion Facility* were also discussed.

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General thanked Minister Pankin for the visit and expressed his belief that the active interest and engagement of the BSEC Member States in the efforts to enhance and streamline the activities of the Organization and of its International Secretariat are most welcome and useful, as they generate a positive spirit of greater involvement of the Member States in supporting the PERMIS for the realization of BSEC aims and objectives.



Promoting Cooperation with UNESCO in the field of Culture, Education, Science and Technology.



During his working visit to Paris on 25 January 2019, Secretary General of BSEC PERMIS, Ambassador Michael B. Christides visited the UNESCO Headquarters.

On this occasion and following his meeting with the UNESCO Deputy Director General Mr. Xing Qu on 3 December 2018 in Istanbul, the Secretary General met with Mr. Genc Seiti, Director of the Division of Member States and Partners of UNESCO; the two sides discussed issues of shared interest and, in particular, how to further promote their cooperation in the fields of Culture, Education, Science and Technology; they also exchanged views on the finalization of the ongoing procedure for the signing of a MoU by the two Organizations.

International Conference on Black Sea Cooperation

(Piri Reis University, Tuzla, 25 January 2019)



Ambassador Selim Yenel, BSEC PERMIS First Deputy Secretary General, delivered a speech at the *International Conference on Black Sea*, informing the audience on the latest activities of the Organization, emphasizing on the BSEC infrastructure projects such as the *Black Sea Ring Highway (BSRH)* and the *Motorways of the Sea (MOS)* that make the transport of goods and people easier and faster in the region and beyond. He also referred to BSEC's efforts to reduce bureaucracy on border crossing formalities and its contacts with other organizations.

Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria accredited to the Republic of Turkey, paid a visit to the BSEC Headquarters.

H.E. Mrs. Nadezhda Neynsky, Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria to the Republic of Turkey, paid a visit to the BSEC Headquarters on 15 February 2019, where she was received by the PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. Christides and the First Deputy Secretary General, Ambassador Selim Yenel.

Ambassadors Christides and Yenel informed their guest on the activities, achievements and plans of the BSEC Organization, especially in what concerns the implementation of the priorities set forth by Bulgaria as the Member State holding currently the Chairmanship-in-Office. The two sides also discussed the possibility of organizing a working breakfast for the Ambassadors of EU Member States and of States holding the status of observer to the BSEC Organization, in order to brief them about the most important recent and forthcoming activities of the latter. Ambassador Neynsky gladly accepted to organize and host the above event in the premises of the Bulgarian Embassy in Ankara.



**81st SESSION OF THE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE OF
THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (UNECE)
High-Level Policy Segment meeting on the Automation in Transport
(Geneva, 19-20 February 2019)**



BSEC continues its practice to take part in meetings of high importance for *Inland Transportation*.

The PERMIS Secretary General participated at the *81st Plenary Session of the Inland Transport Committee of the UNECE* attended by a great number of Ministers and heads of relevant International Organizations, and particularly followed the *High-Level Policy Segment meeting on the Automation in Transport*, delivering a statement during the second Session, concerning the *Challenges and synergies in advancing automation for all modes of transport*.

During his intervention Ambassador Christides pointed out that the issue of digitalization and automation of transport and trade facilitation procedures are important items on the agenda of several BSEC organs. Addressing the problem of delays of commercial vehicles at some Border Crossing Points in the BSEC region, he concluded that there is no alternative to the digitalization and automation of procedures for international trans-border trade and transport.

Upon the request of the Ukrainian side, the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General was also received by the **Minister of Infrastructure of Ukraine, H.E. Mr. Volodymyr Omelyan**.

On the sidelines of the meeting, Ambassador Christides also met and discussed various issues with **Mrs. Susanna Zammataro, Director General of the International Road Federation (IRF)**, **H.E. Mr. Young Tae Kim, Secretary General of the International Transport Forum (ITF OECD)**, **Mrs. Mary Crass, Head of Institutional Relations and ITF Summit**, as well as with many national delegations of BSEC Member States, representatives from PABSEC, IRU, UIC, OTIF and BSEC-URTA, and many other participating stakeholders .

The BSEC Organization: point of reference and the most trustworthy partner in the Black Sea region.

This was the catchphrase of the briefing by PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Christides during the working breakfast hosted by the Bulgarian Ambassador to Turkey, H.E. Mrs. Nadezhda Neynsky, in Ankara on 27 February 2019.

Ambassadors and Heads of Mission of the EU Member States accredited to the Republic of Turkey, as well as the Ambassadors of States enjoying the Observer and the Structural-Dialogue-Partner status with the BSEC Organization were invited to the breakfast. Ambassador Neynsky underlined that the objective of the event was to present and brief the above distinguished invitees on the priorities of the BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office, currently held by Bulgaria, and to inform them on the activities and plans of the Organization, in particular in what concerns its balanced and mutually beneficial cooperation relationship with the EU and other International Organizations.

Taking the floor and after briefly describing the history and institutional structure of BSEC, PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Christides ended his briefing by reiterating to the distinguished members of the audience the following two messages:

- With its long experience, its knowledge of the regional issues and its ability to motivate and influence more local stakeholders, the BSEC Organization has become a point of reference and the most trustworthy partner for the implementation of sustainable policies, new projects and good practices in the region.
- The EU and other international Organizations can take advantage of the above fact, because promoting EU programs or projects in the wider Black Sea region on a collective - multilateral basis is far more efficient and effective than doing so on a limited or bilateral scale.

From his part, the Head of the EU Mission in Ankara, Ambassador Berger, reiterated his support in what concerns the promotion of the cooperation between the EU and BSEC, assuring that the members of his Mission in Ankara will continue to assist, when necessary, in order to bring relevant efforts to a successful conclusion.



Working meeting of the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General with the Governor of the Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey.

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Michael B. Christides paid a visit on 27 February 2019 to the Governor of the Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey, H.E. Mr. Murat Çetinkaya. The Deputy Governor of the Bank, Mr. Murat Uysal, was also present at the meeting.

Ambassador Christides informed the Governor on the activities of the BSEC Organization and especially on those of the BSEC Working Group on Banking and Finance. He mentioned that recently the BSEC PERMIS established cooperation ties with the Toronto Center, seeking for opportunities to implement with the latter joint projects for the benefit of BSEC Member States.

One of the above potential projects concerns the organization of a joint *Workshop for banking supervisors, regulators and government officials from the BSEC Member States*, designed for middle/senior level supervisors and regulators from BSEC Member States with responsibilities in managing financial stability, financial surveillance and supervision of banking institutions and for central bankers involved in monetary policy and operations. In this project, the Central Bank of Turkey is asked to play an important role for its successful preparation and implementation, given its long experience in cooperating with the Toronto Centre.

Governor Mr. ÇETINKAYA expressed his vivid interest in the proposal, adding that it is in harmony with the efforts of the Central Bank of Turkey to establish closer relations with the Central Banks of several neighboring countries, most of them members of BSEC.





“The Istanbul Commitments on the Silk Road Partnership for Migration” and “A Call for Action – a five year plan” were approved by the participating states at the Conference.

Ministerial Session took place on the second day, co-hosted by the Turkish Minister of Interior Suleyman Soylu and the Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto.

Ambassador Selim Yenel, BSEC PERMIS First Deputy Secretary General, participated in the *Budapest Process 6th Ministerial Conference*, which was held on 20 February 2019, in Istanbul. The aim of the Conference was two-fold. Firstly, to approve commitments on migration and secondly, to accept an action plan to implement these commitments.

The Secretary General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres sent a video message to the Conference, expressing how the management of migration was now the top priority.

During the two day event, Ambassador Yenel talked to several distinguished participants, explaining the role and activities of BSEC.



**We do not share the same floor only.
We have more than that in common!**

H.E. Mr. Dato' Ku Jaafar Ku Shaari, Secretary General of the D-8 Organization for Economic Development and his Directorial Staff paid a courtesy visit to the BSEC Headquarters on 26 February 2019. The representatives of the two Secretariats exchanged views on the functioning, activities, achievements and plans of BSEC and D-8.

A thorough exchange of views took place on the prospects of further enhancing cooperation relations between the two Organizations, based on the MoU signed on 18 June 2015 in Chisinau, especially now that the new Headquarters of the D-8 are hosted in the same building and floor as those of the BSEC Organization.

Both sides agreed to continue consultations with a view to identifying ground for joint activities of mutual benefit.

Reinforcing cooperation between the members of the BSEC PERMIS and the members of the PABSEC International Secretariat

A Meeting aimed at further enhancing cooperation between the two International Secretariats and at expanding the daily working contacts among their staff members was held at the BSEC Headquarters on 28 January 2019.

During the Meeting the Secretaries General of both parties underlined the necessity to enhance interaction on topics of common interest in a more effective way.

The two Secretariats agreed to continue holding joint meetings and consultations on a regular basis.



BSEC Headquarters continues to host students from various parts of the world.

Students from the *Legal Student Association of Utrecht University* visited BSEC premises on Wednesday 6 February 2019.

The young guests were informed on the history, the legal basis and functioning, the current and future activities of the BSEC Organization, as well as on BSEC's relations with other regional and international organizations.



BSEC PERMIS participated with a separate Stand in the 36th International Tourist Fair Holiday & SPA EXPO 2019, held from 14 to 16 February 2019 in Sofia.

This year, more than 370 exhibitors from Bulgaria and 24 other countries participated in the main Tourism event in Bulgaria, attracting leading local and foreign companies.

For the first time ever, the BSEC PERMIS was able to participate in a similar event, after the kind invitation and offer of a small stand by the Organizer, with the valuable support of the Bulgarian Ministry of Tourism. BSEC PERMIS had requested from Member States to provide, whenever possible, a small stand that can be used in order to present the BSEC region as an all-in-one attractive tourist destination.

This new experience proved very successful for enhancing the visibility of the BSEC Organization among a wider public and for presenting the tangible results of the cooperation among BSEC Member States in the Tourism sector.



H.E. Mr. Egemen Bağış, Former Minister for EU Affairs and Chief Negotiator of the Republic of Turkey, paid a visit to the BSEC Headquarters on 12 January 2019, where he was received by the PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. Christides and the First Deputy Secretary General, Ambassador Selim Yenel.

Ambassadors Christides and Yenel informed their guest in detail on the activities, achievements and plans for the future of the BSEC Organization.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

- 8th Meeting for Developing a Blue Growth Initiative for Research and Innovation in the Black Sea (*BSEC Headquarters, 18 March 2019*)
- Regional Stakeholder Seminar on Blue Economy - Towards a Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea (*BSEC Headquarters, 19 March 2019*)
- International Conference on “*Inter-basin Cooperation on Marine Litter; A focus on the Danube River and the Black Sea (ICML)*”, co-organized with ICBSS (*Sofia, 4 April 2019*)
- BSEC-Green Energy Investments Forum (*Sofia, 16 April 2019*)



Darıřafaka Caddesi, Seba Center İř Merkezi, No: 45, Kat 3, İstinye, Sarıyer – Istanbul, Turkey
Tel: +90 (212) 229 63 30-35; Fax: +90 (212) 229 63 36