

News from the Black Sea

Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation

Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS)



**VISIT OF H.E. STEPAN KUBIV,
FIRST VICE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AND TRADE OF UKRAINE
(BSEC Headquarters, 26 September 2018)**

“Regional cooperation is one of the priorities of Ukraine and, in this respect, the BSEC Organization assumes a particular role, especially under the present circumstances, when the wider Black Sea area serves as the natural bridge between three continents.”

These were the words of H.E. Mr. Stepan Kubiv, First Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine, who paid a working visit to the PERMIS Headquarters on the side-lines of his bilateral visit to Turkey.

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. Christides, welcomed the high guest, whose visit is a further proof of the importance the Government of Ukraine, founding Member of BSEC, attaches to the Organization.

Ambassador Christides seized the opportunity to inform his high interlocutor on the latest activities of the BSEC Organization, especially in the sectors of Transports, Energy and Tourism, and acquainted him with the most important plans for the near future. Ambassador Christides repeated his appeal that BSEC Members make better use of the knowledge and long experience that the Organization has accumulated during its 26 years of existence, becoming not only a valuable vehicle for regional cooperation, but also an appreciated first level confidence-building mechanism.





High-level conference on sustainable small-scale fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea

Malta 25~26 September 2018

Ensuring best practice becomes future standard practice

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“Globally, 37 million people are estimated to be directly employed in small-scale fisheries activities, while 100 million people are estimated to be engaged in related activities”!

Its Member States and the BSEC Organization firmly believe that small-scale fisheries concern a great number of their citizens, especially in the littoral countries of the Black Sea and, thus, fully support every effort for improving the overall conditions in exercising sustainably their citizen’s respective activities.

Upon the invitation of the “General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean” (GFCM), the responsible Executive Manager of BSEC PERMIS, Mr. Alexei Nistrean, participated in the “High Level Conference on sustainable small-fisheries” (SSF), held in Malta on 25-26 September 2018.

Participants at the event discussed many important issues and adopted the Ministerial

Declaration on “A Regional Plan of Action for Small-Scale Fisheries in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea”, aiming to the support and promotion of small-scale fisheries during the coming ten years.

The PERMIS Executive Manager highlighted that, as a regional platform for cooperation, the BSEC Organization is regularly organizing meetings on fisheries and aquaculture; he informed participants that the second “International Conference on Fisheries and Blue Growth” will be convened in Istanbul in 2019, in cooperation with the Sariyer Municipality of Istanbul.

One of the conclusions of the Conference was that “*due to their intimate knowledge of marine ecosystems, small-scale fisheries actors are well placed to observe major environmental and climate changes. Consequently, small-scale fishers are not only resource users, but also play a role as guardians of the sea*”.

**“GEORGIA INTERNATIONAL
MARITIME FORUM”
(Batumi, 12-14 September 2018)**

Environment monitoring and protection, “Blue Growth”, investment promotion, ports’ development and business opportunities were the main topics of the “Georgia International Maritime Forum” (GIMF) titled “Sustainable development – Role of Partnerships between International Organizations on the example of IMO and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)”.

Organized by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia, under the patronage of the Prime Minister of the country, the second edition of the GIMF brought together high level representatives from the maritime sector, among them from regional organizations and initiatives, from associations, as well as from the private sector.

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. Christides, participated as a keynote speaker in the second panel of the above mentioned Forum and underlined that cooperation among States and International Organizations is imperative, if not indispensable, in order to meet the Sustainable Development Goals in the wider sector of the Maritime industry.



During the Forum different side-events took place. BSEC PERMIS was invited to participate in the Regional Workshop on “IMO Liability and Compensation Conventions” (12 September), which was followed by Mrs. Rositsa Stoeva and in the Workshop on “Investing in Sustainable Small-Scale Cruising for the Black Sea” (14 September), which was followed by Ambassador Christides. Both events presented an excellent opportunity for informing participants on BSEC activities and future plans, as well as for networking.

BSEC and UNECE in Quest of Energy Efficiency in Buildings

Two international organizations uniting forces in order to strengthen their credentials in the critical field of energy efficiency in buildings.

A recent UNECE study on mapping of energy efficiency standards in buildings showed that there was still much room for improvement in the setting and application of energy efficiency standards in buildings in emerging economies. In more than a few countries there are problems both with the strictness and enforcement of these standards.

To address these challenges, UNECE organized a Training Seminar on high-performance energy efficiency standards in buildings, held from 5-7 September in St. Petersburg.

The Seminar took place in the framework of the Project "*Promoting application of high-performance energy efficiency standards in buildings in Member States of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) and of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)*", the implementation of which is funded by the BSEC "*Black Sea Project Promotion Facility*" (BSPPF). This Facility was established through a voluntary contribution of 1 million US Dollars by the Russian Federation to the BSEC PERMIS.



The purpose of the Seminar was to assist policy makers, building sector professionals, researchers and educators in obtaining cutting-edge knowledge of best practices in the development and application of high-performance building standards that they can use in their countries.

Over 50 participants from 15 countries (including the 12 BSEC Member States) took part in the meeting. Deliberations in St. Petersburg have provided useful insight into a broad range of topical issues such as attitudes of government agencies and the role of regional and municipal administrations in implementation of advanced standards; building energy codes in new construction and retrofits of existing building stock; penalties, incentives and other tools for improving compliance; situation by sub-regions; recipes for attracting local and foreign investments.



“To tackle the synergies between the Black Sea and the Danube area.”

The “7th AER Black Sea Summit” hosted by the region of Odessa and co-organized by the “Assembly of European Regions”, and “the German Marshall Fund” took place on 5-6 September 2018 in the beautiful port-city of Odessa.

The event was opened with a speech by the Ex-President of France, Mr. Nicolas Sarkozy, in the form of a Q & A session, moderated by Mr. Bruno Lete, Senior Fellow, the German Marshall Fund - Brussels.

During his address, Mr. Sarkozy described his vision of the regional integration process in the wider Black Sea area and underlined the positive role that Ukraine could assume in this process as the natural and open bridge between East and West.

Among other, various programs and projects promoting the overall development of the wider Black Sea region were highlighted during the Panel, including the important contribution to that end of the EU and the BSEC Organization, by underlining that all relevant efforts are tailored to the desires and plans of the interested littoral States in the region.

Invited by the Organizers, the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. Christides, participated at the panel *“How to reinforce Economic Cooperation in the Black Sea Basin”*.

In his remarks, the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General presented the activities and involvement of the BSEC Organization concerning the overall economic cooperation in the region. He underlined that the answer to the question *“How to reinforce Economic Cooperation in the Black Sea basin”*, which is also the title of the panel he participated in, could be very brief and concise: *“take advantage of the experience and knowledge on the ground of the BSEC Organization with its numerous Working Groups and its important Related Bodies and get actively involved in the many projects, various networks and platforms already functioning under the broader aegis of the Organization”*. Ambassador Christides gave a brief outline on all the above and concluded by saying that in today’s turbulent times trusting more and coordinating effectively with the oldest and most mature regional Organization, that is BSEC, could certainly help create a better atmosphere in the Black Sea region.

Paperless cross border trade is no longer a dream! The eTIR international system facilitates it all and BSEC supports it!

The eTIR international system plays a vital role in securing the exchange of data between national customs systems related to the international transit of goods, vehicles or containers.

The Seminar on *“International Trade and Transport Facilitation Through Digitalization”* which took place in Baku on 5 September 2018, gave the opportunity to the participants to share experiences gained within the framework of the eTIR pilot projects that are taking place in the Black Sea region and to identify the means for digitalizing the TIR procedure in further intermodal TIR corridors.

Organized in a number of separate sessions, the Seminar was attended by over sixty participants, including senior customs officials, TIR associations and representatives of international organizations.

Participants shared experiences and expressed their views on what should be the further steps to be taken in international trade and transport facilitation to make cooperation between the stakeholders more efficient. They also analyzed the results and expansion of pilot projects between Turkey and Iran, Georgia and Turkey, Turkey and Ukraine and along the corridor linking Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.

During his address the BSEC PERMIS representative, Mr. Kanan Murtuzov, informed the participants on the ongoing activities within the BSEC Organization in the trade, customs and transport sectors, on the work done to prepare the Trade Facilitation Strategy for the BSEC Region, BSEC's efforts for the development of proper infrastructure, for the facilitation of road transport of goods, and the BSEC Permit System etc.



“Elimination of bottlenecks, inefficiencies and missing links along EATL routes; development of logistics centers, that of hubs and dry ports; modernization of border crossing points; introduction of public-private partnerships and other market-oriented and innovative ways of cooperation.”

These were the main topics of interest during the Conference *“Making Euro-Asian Transport Corridors Operational”* held in Geneva on 3-4 September 2018, in the framework of the *“31st session of the UNECE Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics”*.

The Conference was attended by over 80 senior-level government representatives of EATL countries (*“Euro-Asian Transport Linkages”*) together with private sector stakeholders, shippers, rail operators, road transport associations, investment banks as well as representatives of international organizations.

Participants presented their respective experiences and exchanged views on how to further facilitate the operationalization of Euro-Asian corridors and make inland transport a major contributor to the economic development and trade facilitation in the region.

The Project Coordinator of the BSEC PERMIS, Mr. Yevgen Koziy informed participants about the BSEC activities contributing to the development of the EATL, in particular, about its work on the Black Sea Ring Highway and the Motorways of the Sea projects, the reduction of bureaucracy, the development of partnerships with professional organizations - like IRU, BSEC-URTA and others. It was underscored that BSEC can undertake a greater role in promoting the aims and objectives of UNECE in order to achieve better complementarity and synergy on the development of transportation in general, and of the Euro - Asian Transport linkages, in particular.

22ND MEETING OF IFI COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS SPECIALISTS

(Paliouri, 27-29 August 2018)

The Secretary General of the BSEC PERMIS, Ambassador Michael B. Christides, was invited to participate as the key-note speaker in the Annual International Financial Institutions conference on Human Resources, which was hosted this year by the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB) in Paliouri, Halkidiki peninsula, Greece, on 27-29 August 2018.

This was the “22nd Meeting of IFI Compensation and Benefits Specialists”, to which many representatives from international development banking institutions took part, discussing and exchanging views on important issues concerning their human capital.

Ambassador Christides had the opportunity to inform participants on the activities of the BSEC Organization and to touch upon issues concerning the most efficient and effective ways of managing people at the working place.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

Meeting of the Ministers in charge of Transports of the BSEC Member States

(Baku, 25 October 2018)

«Boosting Trade through better Connectivity»

The Ministers will consider the current state of affairs concerning transport cooperation and synergies, as well as ways to strengthening efforts for facilitating Trade and Transports in the geo-strategic Black Sea region.



WORKSHOP FOR YOUNG DIPLOMATS FROM THE BSEC MEMBER STATES “REGIONAL POLICIES IN THE WIDER BLACK SEA AREA”

(Istanbul, 22th - 25th October 2018)

Promoting regional cooperation among the future foreign policy decision-makers in the Black Sea area!

The Workshop, which will be a joint event co-organized by the BSEC PERMIS and the “Konrad Adenauer Foundation” (KAS) -

Turkey, will provide the participating young diplomats with the opportunity to meet their counterparts from other BSEC Member States.

The event will also offer the occasion to young diplomats to familiarize themselves with the broader issues of regional context. Speakers will include important personalities and figures from the region, as well as representatives from BSEC PERMIS and KAS.

