

News from the Black Sea

Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation

Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS)

BSEC

PERMANENT INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT (PERMIS)

BSEC

**Dear Readers,**

We have already left behind the first and quite rich and intensive half of the year 2025, during which, under the guidance of the Azerbaijani Chairmanship-in-Office (CiO), a series of productive activities were carried out, consisting of working visits and meetings, including high level ones such as the Fiftieth Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States (CMFA). I seize this opportunity to thank once again the Azerbaijani CiO for their effective chairing of the Organization in a challenging period and ensuring thus the smooth operation of the Organization.

This issue of our Newsletter covers the May-July 2025 period.

The month of June marks the anniversary of our Organization. On 25 June, BSEC celebrated its establishment 33 years ago, as well as its accomplishments and assertiveness as the only full-fledged Organization that covers the wider Black Sea region expanding from the Balkans to the Caucasus. BSEC continues to be the most useful platform for regional economic cooperation and dialogue, not only working for the benefit of its Member States, but also for the welfare of the wide region it covers. Further efforts are needed all the more so to overcome the current challenges our region is still facing, first and foremost to bring peace back in the Black Sea area.

As BSEC, we also believe further intensified actions are needed in terms of environment protection. Devastating wildfires ravaged once again this year two of our Member States, Greece and Türkiye. Acting together within BSEC and with partners in adjacent regions can help overcome increasing wildfires destroying each year over hundreds of thousands of hectares of lands across our region and beyond.

Dear Readers,

To conclude my message, I would like to welcome the Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-Office who will be at the helm of BSEC Organization from 1 July to 31 December 2025. I wish them all the success during their tenure. You may access the priorities and calendar of events of the latter on the following links:

<https://www.bsec-organization.org/chairmanship>

<https://www.bsec-organization.org/events/eventType/Upcoming>

Last but not least, BSEC PERMIS staff and I wish you a happy summer while staying tuned with us via BSEC website and social media accounts!

***Ambassador Lazar Comanescu
Secretary General***

HEADLINES

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Fiftieth CMFA



The Fiftieth Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (CMFA) of the BSEC Member States was held online on 27 June 2025 and was chaired by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan H.E. Mr. Elnur Mammadov.

The Ministers adopted Resolutions on several important issues and reviewed the latest developments in the region and within the Organization, emphasizing on the important role BSEC Organization plays therein. They expressed their high appreciation to the Republic of Azerbaijan for its successful Chairmanship-in-Office of BSEC and wished the forthcoming Chairmanship of Bulgaria all the success in its activities.

Coordination Meeting of the Bulgarian BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office



The Coordination Meeting of the Bulgarian BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office with the BSEC Committee of Senior Officials, BSEC Related Bodies and BSEC PERMIS took place online on 14 July 2025.

H.E. Mrs. Elena Shekerlenova, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, presented the Priorities of the Chairmanship-in-Office under the motto “Collective Commitment in the Black Sea Area”.

[Priorities of the Chairmanship Calendar of events](#)

WORKING VISITS

Working visit to Sofia



BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu visited Sofia on 1 July 2025 for consultations in the context of the assumption by Bulgaria of the BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office (CiO) for the period of 1 July-31 December 2025.

During the consultations, Ambassador Comanescu conveyed his thanks and highest appreciation for Bulgaria's active support and contribution to BSEC activities. He expressed his confidence that under the guidance of the Bulgarian CiO, BSEC will make further progress in advancing cooperation and tackling the current challenges in the region.

In the framework of his visit, Ambassador Comanescu also delivered a lecture at the Diplomatic Institute, elaborating on the current state of play and complex challenges in the Black Sea region.

BSEC WORKING GROUPS/STEERING COMMITTEES

During the period covered by this Newsletter, BSEC PERMIS held a number of Working Group meetings covering such areas of cooperation as Emergency Assistance/Seismic Risk, Culture, Exchange of Statistical Data and Economic Information, Education, and Budgetary and Financial Issues.

KEY EVENTS

BSEC-URTA General Assembly



The 45th Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly was held in Chisinau on 16 May 2025, addressing key issues and decisions regarding regional transport and logistics cooperation.

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Lazar Comanescu participated in the meeting and underlined the importance BSEC PERMIS attaches to its cooperation with BSEC-URTA in their joint effort to better promote trade and transports in the BSEC region. He emphasized on the introduction of the BSEC Permit System, digitalization of transport documents and border-crossing facilitation. On the sidelines of the General Assembly, Ambassador Comanescu had bilateral exchanges with the representatives of other organizations on ways and means for further deepening cooperation and synergies in the field of transport in the Black Sea area.

ITF Annual Summit

The ITF Annual Summit was held in Leipzig on 21–23 May 2025. The generic topic of the Summit was “Transport Resilience to Global Shocks” and the debates were concentrated on how to ensure the continuity of transport systems amidst disruptions such as natural disasters, pandemics, cyber-attacks, and geopolitical crises. The main discussions focused on policies for adapting to, mitigating and recovering from these shocks, with an emphasis on transforming systems into more sustainable and resilient networks.



Addressing the Open Ministerial Session, BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu highlighted the importance and the need by public national or international authorities and institutions to closely interact with and involve the business communities, private actors and their associations in shaping and implementing policies, decisions and programs/projects.

Ambassador Comanescu also participated in a Ministerial side event organized by the World Bank, on the Middle Corridor, where the latest developments and possible tools to improve the Corridor's efficiency were discussed, including digitalization framework.

SEECP Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs



The Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Southeast Europe Cooperation Process (SEECP) took place in Tirana on 16 June 2025, under the Albanian SEECP Chairmanship-in-Office, and the generic theme "Boosting Regional Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth as Pathways to EU Integration for SEECP-EU Aspiring Participants". The Ministerial Meeting was preceded, in the same day, by the Annual Meeting of the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) - the executive branch of the SEECP.

Addressing both the RCC and the Ministerial Meeting, BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu dwelled on the benefits of BSEC-SEECP/RCC cooperation and emphasized the importance of further strengthening it through enhanced correlation and coordination all the more so as the BSEC and SEECP regions face common challenges in areas such as energy, marine ecosystem, trade and transport-connectivity, etc.

General Assembly of PABSEC

The 65th General Assembly of PABSEC, organized by the Milli Majlis of the Republic of Azerbaijan was held in Baku on 18-19 June 2025. The Assembly was attended by the members of the national delegations to the PABSEC, the representatives of BSEC Related Bodies and PABSEC Observers.

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu participated in the General Assembly and in his address to the plenary session, elaborated on the activities of BSEC Organization since the last General Assembly held in Yerevan on December 2024. He stressed on the need of continued efforts by BSEC and BSEC Related Bodies aimed at coping with the challenges the BSEC region is confronted with and expressed his appreciation for the fruitful cooperation between BSEC PERMIS and PABSEC International Secretariat.



BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu had a meeting in St. Petersburg on 20 June 2025, in the margin of St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF), with H.E. Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. An exchange of views took place on this occasion with regard to the role of BSEC in promoting economic cooperation in the Black Sea region and ways to further enhancing the contribution of the Organization to the fulfillment of this important objective.



BSTDB Board of Governors

The 27th Annual Meeting of the BSTDB Board of Governors and the BSTDB Business Forum titled “Armenia: Accelerating Regional Success”, were held in Yerevan on 9-10 July 2025.

The Governors evaluated the Bank’s operational activity and unanimously approved the Financial Statements for 2024. They praised BSTDB’s sustained role as a reliable partner for regional economic advancement.

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu addressed the Board of Governors and highlighted the good opportunities for further enhancing cooperation particularly through the development and implementation of tangible projects for the benefit of the countries in the Black Sea area.



OTHER EVENTS

International Blue Black Sea Congress



The 8th International Blue Black Sea Congress was held in Istanbul on 8-9 May 2025. The generic topic discussed was “Conflict Resolution Sustainability and Development”.

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu participated as a keynote speaker and in his address to the Opening Panel of the Congress, he elaborated on the role and activities of BSEC in promoting regional economic cooperation, highlighting in this context the important contribution it brings to enhancing security, stability, and sustainable development in the Black Sea area.

Annual Large Marine Ecosystem Consultation Meeting (LME24)



The 24th Annual Large Marine Ecosystem Consultation Meeting (LME24) took place in Athens on 14-16 May 2025. LME contributes to the development of the LME partnerships by engaging marine, coastal management, biodiversity and coastal climate change adaptation project leaders. Presentations followed by break-out sessions with free discussions took place during the meeting. The participants shared their experiences with the implementation of projects and the main problems that affect the implementation of these projects.

Yerevan Dialogue International Forum

The second edition of the Forum which took place in Yerevan on 26-27 May 2025, carried out under the generic topic of “Navigating the Unknown”, consisted of several thematic panels.

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu participated as a panelist in the session on “South Caucasus as a Strategic Hub: Challenges and Opportunities for Trade and Connectivity”. While emphasizing the role of BSEC in the promotion of dialogue and economic cooperation in the Black Sea region and beyond, Ambassador Comanescu underlined the importance of connectivity, which for BSEC has

been a top priority area of its activities.



Bridging COP29 and COP30

Invited by the Consul General of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Istanbul, Mrs. Narmina Mustafayeva, BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Lazar Comanescu participated in the Conference “Bridging COP29 and COP30: Diplomacy, Action and the Climate Road Ahead”, held in Istanbul on 30 May 2025.

Ambassador Comanescu addressed the opening session and highlighted the efforts of BSEC in the field of environment and climate change, as well as the participation of BSEC PERMIS in COP29 held in Baku in November 2024.



ITF Day at the OECD



The fifth edition of the “ITF Day at the OECD” was held in Paris on 10 June 2025.

The event provided an opportunity for highlighting the importance of regional and international collaboration as well as of bringing together ITF member countries to discuss pressing global challenges in transport and connectivity.

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu participated in the event as a panelist at the Session: “Harnessing the potential of the Middle Corridor”, where he stressed the relevance of the Black Sea region as a connectivity hub and its key role in a successful development of the Middle Corridor as part of an efficient transport and connectivity network between Europe and Asia.

Blueing the Black Sea (BBSEA)

The First Regional Steering Committee and Launch Meeting of the Blueing the Black Sea (BBSEA), jointly organized by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the World Bank Group, and BSEC PERMIS was held at the BSEC Headquarters on 11-12 June 2025.

The Panel discussion on “Opportunities for Building Synergies”, as well as a Round Table discussion gave the participants the opportunity to exchange views and explore potential collaboration with other projects and outreach to different stakeholders.

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu addressed the Committee and emphasized the importance of the project for our region as an important tool to boost and support innovation and environmental protection in the region.



Meeting of the Presidents of the Academies of Sciences

The 2nd Meeting of the Presidents of the Academies of Sciences of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation was held in Istanbul on 27 June 2025, under the theme "Cooperation and Development of Science and Education in the Black Sea Region".

The participants exchanged views on strengthening cooperation in science and education to foster sustainable development and innovation in the wider Black Sea region.

In his presentation, BSEC PERMIS Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dimitrios Rallis referred to the importance that BSEC attaches to the areas of education and science and technology and confirmed BSEC PERMIS's

commitment to fostering and directing partnership collaboration towards promoting dialogue, regional stability and economic cooperation in the Black Sea area.



Global Transport Connectivity Forum 2025

The Forum was held in Istanbul on 27-29 June 2025.

Discussions were held on developing and optimizing international transport corridors, fostering sustainable development, green transition and regional cooperation at a global scale, etc. Speaking at the panel devoted to the “Role of Regional Initiatives in Transport Connectivity Strategy”, BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu said connectivity development has been a top priority among BSEC’s activities, with particular attention being given to promoting the Black Sea Region. He also emphasized on the key role of this region as sustainable transport systems which meet the economic, social and environmental needs of connectivity hub and elaborated on the most

important projects developed within BSEC such as the Black Sea Ring Highway, Motorways of the Sea and the BSEC Permit System.



BRIDGE-BS Black Sea Towards 2050



A webinar organized in the framework of the HORIZON 2020 funded BRIDGE-BS project where BSEC- PERMIS is a partner, was held on 3 July 2025. The topic of the Webinar was “BRIDGE-BS Black Sea Towards 2050 Series - Webinar 2: Technologies for Smart Monitoring of Multi-Stressors: Readiness and Upscaling”. It focused on smart monitoring technologies developed within BRIDGE-BS and how to upscale them.

10th Anniversary of NSC



Upon the invitation of the President of the New Strategy Center (NSC), BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu participated in the Gala Conference dedicated

to the 10th Anniversary of New Strategy Center held in Bucharest on 3 July 2025.

The NSC is a Romanian think tank with activities covering the area of international relations and security. The event in Bucharest offered a good opportunity to exchange views on developments in the Black Sea area and venues for further extending collaboration among think tanks in the region.

Visit by Leiden University students

A group of students and researchers from Leiden University were received at their request, at the BSEC Headquarters on 7 July 2025. They were informed about the mission and role of the BSEC Organization in promoting economic cooperation in the Black Sea region, and were introduced to the activities and priorities of BSEC in this regard.





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