



ORGANIZATION OF THE
BLACK SEA ECONOMIC
COOPERATION

News

from the Black Sea

July – September 2026

Issue No: 35



Dear Readers,

It is a pleasure to welcome you to this latest issue of our newsletter, News from the Black Sea, as we started a highly active semester. This period marks a renewed momentum for our region under the Hellenic Chairmanship-in-Office of BSEC (1 July – 31 December 2026), operating under the motto: "Moving forward: Promoting regional economic cooperation in the wider Black Sea area". BSEC will continue to promote a forward-looking project-oriented and impact-driven approach with an emphasis on connectivity, sustainable development, and regional economic diplomacy. We use this opportunity to reiterate our support to the Hellenic Chairmanship during its six months tenure.

Dear Readers,

We started this fall with several important meetings and events. Notably, through a joint initiative of the Hellenic Chairmanships of both BSEC and the BSEC Business Council, a dedicated BSEC Pavilion successfully showcased the work of the Organization and its Related Bodies at the Thessaloniki International Fair (5–13 September 2026). This event not only contributed to the further visibility of the BSEC Organization, but it was also significant in terms of the revitalization of the BSEC Business Council, which adopted a Declaration during its Board of Directors Meeting held within the framework of the above-mentioned Fair.

We celebrated in September the World Tourism Day (27 September). In this context, we would like to highlight that the BSEC region has tremendous tourism potential. It offers travelers various opportunities in terms of hospitality, natural beauty, eco-tourism, culture, history, cuisine, and more. We as BSEC are actively working to shift the region's tourism model toward sustainability, digitalization, and climate consciousness. However, the tourism sector remains deeply susceptible to undesirable environmental crises. This past summer, we witnessed with grave concern the

devastating impact of large-scale wildfires that raged across several BSEC Member States. These ecological crises have reminded us of the vulnerability of our ecosystems and the necessity for regional cooperation and solidarity. It is precisely for this reason that we place priority on the revival of the Agreement on Collaboration in Emergency Assistance and Emergency Response to Natural and Man-Made Disasters signed in Sochi, in 1998.

Dear Readers,

To conclude, we wish you a pleasant reading of the “News from the Black Sea”, and invite you to remain engaged with our ongoing initiatives via the BSEC website and our official social media channels.

***Ambassador Lazar Comanescu
Secretary General***



HEADLINES

- **In the spotlight**
- **Working and courtesy visits**
- **BSEC Working Groups/Steering Committees**
- **Key events**
- **Other events**



IN THE SPOTLIGHT



*Moving Forward:
Promoting economic cooperation
in the wider Black Sea area*

Coordination Meeting

The Hellenic Republic took over the Chairmanship-in-Office (CiO) of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) for the 1 July – 31 December 2026 term. On 3 July 2026, the Hellenic CiO hosted an online coordination meeting with the BSEC Committee of Senior Officials, Related Bodies, and BSEC PERMIS.

Under the motto “Moving forward: Promoting regional economic cooperation in the wider Black Sea area,” the BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office focuses on boosting regional connectivity, enhancing people-to-people contacts, strengthening international partnerships, and encouraging project-oriented cooperation. For more information:

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

WORKING AND COURTESY VISITS



BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu paid an official visit to Athens on 6–8 July 2026, to mark the start of the Hellenic Chairmanship-in-Office (1 July – 31 December 2026). During his visit, Ambassador Comanescu held high-level consultations with Foreign Minister George Gerapetritis, and Deputy Foreign Minister, Haris Theocharis. He also attended the conference “Enhancing Connectivity in the wider Black Sea region – Priorities of the Greek Chairmanship at the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation” organized by ICBSS.



*Visit by Mr. Heorhii Filatov,
Consul General of Ukraine in Istanbul,
(BSEC Headquarters, 14 July 2026)*



*Visit by Mr. Rza Aliyev, Secretary General of the
Nizami Ganjavi International Center (NGIC)
(BSEC Headquarters, 3 September 2026)*



*Visit by Mr. Daan Huising, Consul General of the
Kingdom of the Netherlands in Istanbul
(BSEC Headquarters, 4 September 2026)*



*Visit by Mr. Mehmet Uylukçu,
Secretary General of the Union of Road Transport
Associations in the BSEC Region (BSEC-URTA)
(BSEC Headquarters, 23 September 2026)*

BSEC WORKING GROUPS/STEERING COMMITTEES

During the period covered by this Newsletter, BSEC PERMIS held the Working Group meeting on Budgetary and Financial Issues.

KEY EVENTS

BSTDB Board of Governors



The 28th Annual Meeting of the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB) Board of Governors was held in Baku on 1 July 2026, to review the Bank's past-year performance and outline future objectives.

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu attended the meeting, praising the Bank's vital role in driving sustainable economic development and regional cooperation, he highlighted the strong partnership as essential for achieving the BSEC Economic Agenda, enhancing project initiatives, and thanked the BSTDB President and his team in this context.

Thessaloniki International Fair and BSEC BC Board of Directors



A joint initiative by the Hellenic Chairmanship-in-Office and the BSEC Business

Council (BSEC BC) hosted a Pavilion dedicated to BSEC Organization and its Related Bodies at the Thessaloniki International Fair on 5–13 September 2026.

The Meeting of the BSEC BC Board of Directors was held in parallel to the above event. Key discussions at the meeting focused on optimizing operations, revising the Statute of the Business Council, upgrading the website, and establishing a central registry protocol.

BSEC PERMIS was represented by Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dimitrios Rallis, and Executive Manager Tabriz Garayev at both events.

13th BRAF Annual Meeting



BSEC PERMIS First Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dr. Merve Kavakcı and Executive Manager Mr. Alexei Nistean attended the 13th BRAF Annual Meeting in Sofia on 16–18 September 2026, hosted by Bulgaria's Council for Electronic Media.

The event gathered representatives from nine BSEC Member States to present country regulatory reports and featured a dedicated session on Artificial Intelligence in media regulation. Ambassador Dr. Kavakcı delivered an overview of BSEC activities and advocated for stronger institutional collaboration, meanwhile Mr. Nistean moderated a panel exploring how AI reshapes content creation and distribution while protecting fundamental right.

TOURAL Project General Assembly



The 5th General Assembly of the TOURAL Project was held in Tulcea, Romania, on September 16–18 2026, bringing together the members of the

TOURAL Consortium to review final progress ahead of the European Commission's final review.

The Consortium focused on implementing Cultural Sustainable Tourism (UCCST) models, pilot activities, and the TOURAL ICT ecosystem, which includes tools like the Sustainability Simulator, VR Tools, and Tourism Data Spaces. Participants also discussed project dissemination, future replication roadmaps, and explored the cultural potential of the Danube Delta, highlighting opportunities to replicate these sustainable tourism solutions across the wider Black Sea region through BSEC cooperation.

OTHER EVENTS

GIMF 2026



The International Maritime Forum 2026 (GIMF 2026) was held in Batumi on 7–8 September 2026, under the theme "Where Seas Meet Corridors". Global maritime leaders and ministers discussed maritime connectivity, the strategic importance of the Middle Corridor, digital transformation, sustainable shipping, and supply chain resilience.

Speaking at the high-level panel on international cooperation, BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu highlighted, among others, the Black Sea region's geostrategic importance as a hub linking Asia and Europe, emphasizing that maritime cooperation remains a top priority for BSEC.

Karpacz Economic Forum



BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu attended the 35th Karpacz Economic Forum in Karpacz on 8–10 September

2026, themed "Architecture of the New Order - Stability in Times of Change". Speaking on a panel about the economic importance of Southeastern Europe, he highlighted the region's geostrategic value and market potential. He emphasized the role of BSEC in promoting regional cooperation and called for increased coordination among active organizations in trade, connectivity, and energy, pointing to projects like the Black Sea Ring Highway and the Motorways of the Sea as essential for connecting Europe and Asia.

International Entrepreneurship Forum

The 22nd International Entrepreneurship Forum Conference took place in Istanbul on 14 September 2026. Hosted by Özyeğin University, the event focused on “Entrepreneurship, Values and Wellbeing in the Age of AI,” specifically exploring how artificial intelligence impacts SMEs.

BSEC PERMIS Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dimitrios Rallis represented the Organization at the event. In his address, Ambassador Rallis underscored the capacity of artificial intelligence to enhance productivity and expand entrepreneurial opportunities. Furthermore, he outlined BSEC’s strategic priorities regarding digital

transformation, education, and the development of innovation networks in alignment with the BSEC Economic Agenda.



BSEC PERMIS participated in the 15th Advisory Forum on the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, held in Yerevan on 23-25 September 2026. Convened under the theme “Routes through Time and Cultures: Education for Sustainable Heritage,” the forum brought together Council of Europe Member State representatives and heritage experts to

discuss the roles of culture and education in safeguarding heritage.

During the panel on sustainable heritage education, BSEC PERMIS presented its regional perspective, emphasizing how regional cooperation connects institutions and facilitates best-practice exchanges among BSEC Member States.

Additionally, BSEC PERMIS participated in the Informal Meeting of the EPA Governing Board, held on 22 September on the margins of the Forum, where it provided an overview of relevant BSEC activities and developments in the wider Black Sea region, with particular emphasis on the interlinkages between culture, tourism, education and sustainable regional development.



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