



ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Permanent International Secretariat

PRESS RELEASE ON THE "7th AER BLACK SEA SUMMIT" (Odessa, 5-6 September 2018)

Invited by the Organizers, the "Assembly of European Regions" and "The German Marshall Fund", the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. Christides, participated at the panel under the title: "How to reinforce Economic Cooperation in the Black Sea Basin", held during the "7th AER Black Sea Summit", which took place in Odessa, Ukraine, on 5-6 September 2018.

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, German Marshall Fund – Brussels.

During the first panel, the Head of the Eastern Partnership & Regional Cooperation of the European External Action Service highlighted the various programs and projects that the EU has and is promoting for the overall development of the wider Black Sea region, mentioning also the important cooperation with the BSEC Organization in some of them and underlining that all efforts are tailored to the desires and wishes of the interested States in the region.

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.

On the sidelines of the event Ambassador Christides had discussions with many of the distinguished participants; most importantly he exchanged views with the AER Secretary General, Mr. Matthieu Mori, on how to possibly increase the number of regions from BSEC Member States participating in the "Assembly of European Regions" (AER).

Also, on the sidelines of the event, the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General met with Mr. Bruno Lete, Senior Fellow of the GMF in Brussels and explored the ground for possible synergies in the future.-