



**PRESS RELEASE ON THE WORLD CONGRESS
OF THE INTERNATIONAL ROAD TRANSPORT UNION (IRU)**
(Muscat, Oman, 6-8 November 2018)

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. Christides was invited to participate at the IRU World Congress, which was co-hosted by the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Oman in Muscat, from 6-8 November 2018.

The Congress welcomed Transport Ministers, heads of intergovernmental organizations, industry leaders and important business figures from the Middle East and the world. Apart from focusing on the most important developments in the crucial sector of road transports, which are becoming increasingly digital, connected and automated, the aim of the Congress was to underline that better mobility is crucial to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, to boost trade, create jobs and to ensure the safety of communities.

Ambassador Christides was invited to participate in the closed-door session that brought together Ministers and government representatives with industry leaders, in order to hear the latter's voice on the rapid development taking place in the sector; he was also invited to actively participate in the "Inclusive ministerial dialogue" session, which brought together ministerial and intergovernmental leaders in order to discuss a new blueprint for private-public cooperation in road transport, covering four main areas: trade facilitation, human capital, environment and innovation.

In his brief address the PERMIS Secretary General informed participants on the great importance that BSEC and its Member States attach to cooperating in the extremely significant sector of road transports and described the Organization's achievements up to this day. Ambassador Christides underlined that, although much has been achieved during the 26 years of activity of the BSEC organization, the pace with which the coordination and cooperation among its member states was actually progressing was not satisfactory, especially for the local transport industry: according to BSEC-URTA there are still many measures and good practices that have to be implemented in order to diminish the various barriers and impediments that burden not only the haulers themselves, but the entire economies of BSEC States. He added that during the last meeting of the respective BSEC Working Group a lot of commitments were taken by Member States in order to speed-up the necessary procedures.

During the above sessions many significant views were expressed, which were summarized and found reflection in the document titled "*The Muscat Compact*", endorsed by the Ministers present, as a base upon which the transport industry can effectively cooperate and coordinate with the Governments.

The most compelling conclusion reached during the session was that Governments should work closer together with the transport industry, in order to be able not only to follow innovation and progress in technology, but also in order to be able to legislate correctly and timely, especially in what concerns multi-modal transports, to which, as it was argued, we would very soon include also transports in space.