



**PRESS RELEASE ON
MEETING OF THE MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF CULTURE OF
THE BSEC MEMBER STATES**

(Belgrade, 23 November 2018)

A Meeting of the Ministers in charge of Culture of the BSEC Member States, the first one since 2007, was hosted in Belgrade on 23 November 2018 by the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Serbia, as the current Country-Coordinator of the BSEC Working Group on Culture. The Meeting was opened by H.E. Mr. Vladan VUKOSAVLJEVIC, Minister of Culture and Media of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Zoltan PEK, Vice-Chairman of the PABSEC Cultural, Educational and Social Affairs Committee, Member of the PABSEC Serbian Delegation, and Dr. Sergei GONCHARENKO, Deputy Secretary General of the BSEC PERMIS.

The Ministers in charge of Culture and heads of delegations exchanged views on the issues of cooperation among the BSEC Member States in the field of culture, focusing on the main theme "*Cultural diplomacy, a tool for a better world - (Re)shaping cultural diplomacy for a stable and secure world in the Black Sea Region*" and adopted "*The Belgrade Declaration of the Ministers in charge of Culture of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation*".

The BSEC Ministers reaffirmed in the Declaration their commitment to strengthen cultural cooperation among themselves and to continue promoting the model of cultural cooperation based on mutual understanding and respect; they acknowledged cultural diplomacy as an important soft power tool that builds bridges among peoples and cultural exchanges as an instrument for addressing challenges of globalization, promoting respect for cultural diversity and fostering mutual understanding. They also underlined the importance of following new trends in international culture relations which pave ways for novel partnerships and strengthen the cooperation with the BSEC Related Bodies and various other entities. Stressing the importance of joint projects in the field of culture in the BSEC Region, the Member States' Ministers recognized cultural heritage as an important resource of the region and encouraged creativity through also the support of the mobility of artists; they agreed that mutual understanding is better served through the promotion of linguistic diversity and local literature.

The Meeting of the Ministers was preceded by the Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Culture (Belgrade, 22 November 2018).