



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

(Plovdiv, Bulgaria, 14 June 2019)

The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria hosted in Plovdiv on 14 June 2019, within the framework of the Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-Office of BSEC, the Meeting of the Ministers in charge of Culture of the BSEC Member States. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Mrs. Amelia GESHEVA, Deputy Minister of Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria. The Ministers focused on the role of cultural heritage as an important instrument for regional cooperation among the BSEC Member States and adopted the “Plovdiv Declaration of the Ministers in charge of Culture of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation”.

In his opening statement, the Secretary General of the BSEC PERMIS, Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES recalled that one of the most important statutory goals of the BSEC Organization is to promote efforts for enhancing respect, understanding and cooperation among its Member States and their people of different religious and cultural backgrounds and informed on concrete projects considered by the BSEC Working Group on Culture. The Secretary General stressed the need for active participation and engagement of the BSEC Member States in the meetings of the relevant Working Group and expressed the readiness of the BSEC PERMIS to positively react to any project or initiative BSEC Member States might wish to promote in the field of cultural cooperation and to contribute with its own proposals.

The Plovdiv Declaration, *inter alia*, underlined the need to expand to a higher degree cooperation not only between the BSEC Members States, but also with UNESCO and other international organizations on issues of common interest in the policies and practices of cultural heritage, including on issues related to the offenses regarding cultural goods, in particular illicit trafficking of cultural property, to which creation of a BSEC Network of Experts on Cultural Heritage issues could contribute. The BSEC Working Group on Culture was requested to create the necessary conditions to enhance the cooperation on the abovementioned issues.

Two important presentations by the representatives of the Atlantis Consulting SA, Thessaloniki, Greece, on the “BLUEMED” project, and of the Regional Centre for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in South-Eastern Europe under the auspices of UNESCO, on the activities of the Centre, attracted the interest of the participants.

The Meeting of the Senior Experts from the Ministries of Culture of the BSEC Member States was also held in Plovdiv on 13 June 2019, in order to consider and finalize all necessary draft documents for the Ministerial Meeting.