



PRESS RELEASE

ON THE OFFICIAL VISIT OF THE PERMIS SECRETARY GENERAL TO BUDAPEST

(Budapest, 25 November 2019)

Upon the invitation by H.E. Mr. Péter SZTÁRAY, State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary, PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES visited Budapest on 25 November 2019, in order to jointly discuss and identify the potential fields and forms of a future possible cooperation between BSEC and Hungary, a BSEC Observer State.

The Secretary General's visit coincided with a Conference organized by the *Institute of Foreign Affairs and Trade* of Hungary in cooperation with the *International Centre for Black Sea Studies* (ICBSS), during which a *Memorandum of Understanding* (MOU) between the two entities was signed.

On his opening speech H.E. Mr. Péter SZTÁRAY described the prevailing situation in the wider region of Eastern Europe and the Black Sea, underlining the need, especially today, for enhanced cooperation and coordination of efforts by the States in the region. From his side, Ambassador CHRISTIDES informed the audience on the activities of the BSEC Organization, its achievements and the challenges it faces, as well as on its future plans.

Ambassador CHRISTIDES was later received by H.E. Mr. Péter SZTÁRAY for a closed bilateral meeting, during which the two parties had the opportunity to exchange views and proposals on how to promote concrete cooperation between BSEC and Hungary. Mr. András BARANYI, Deputy State Secretary for Development of Eastern Relations in the Hungarian MFA and Ambassador Iván GYURCSIK, National Coordinator of Hungary for Relations with BSEC were also present during this meeting. The two sides agreed on the value of establishing closer working relations and exchanged preliminary views concerning the sectors in which they should concentrate their respective efforts.

Later on State Secretary SZTÁRAY offered a working lunch in honor of Ambassador CHRISTIDES with the presence of Heads of Department of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, during which an expanded exchange of views and interesting proposals on bilateral cooperation took place.

The working visit of Ambassador CHRISTIDES to Budapest ended with his meeting with H.E. Mr. Zsolt NEMETH, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Hungarian Parliament.