



**PRESS RELEASE
ON THE
“E-COMMERCE ONLINE SEMINAR FOR SMEs FROM THE BLACK SEA REGION”
(21 September 2020)**

The “*E-commerce Online Seminar for SMEs from the Black Sea Region*” was held on 21 September 2020 through videoconference hosted by the *Global Rus Trade LLC* (GRT). The seminar was organized as the concluding event of the project on “*E-commerce Opportunities for SMEs: Boosting Exports and Opening New Markets*”, which was funded through the *Black Sea Project Promotion Facility* (BSPPF) and implemented by GRT. The BSPPF is a mechanism of the BSEC Organization created in 2016 with the generous donation of 1 million USD by the Russian Federation, aiming to develop projects with the broadest possible impact in the Black Sea region.

The seminar was attended by more than 50 participants representing public and private sectors/business communities from BSEC Member States; representatives from BSEC PERMIS and from the Russian Ministries of Foreign Affairs and of Economic Development welcomed participants with brief introductory addresses.

As is known, during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic the importance and use of E-Commerce technology and platforms has increased enormously, given the various restrictions applied in order to contain the spread of the virus. The aim of the Seminar was to open the door to a more beneficial and effective use of E-Commerce technology, thus helping interested SMEs to acquire the necessary knowledge and capabilities in order to increase their radius of activities, multiply their export capacity and reach into new, far-away markets.

During his welcoming speech the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES briefed participants on the BSEC Organization and its activities for the development of E-Commerce and the strengthening of SMEs in the BSEC region. In this regard, he expressed the hope that the outcome of the Seminar will complement and enhance the efforts undertaken so far by the BSEC Member States in order to increase the role of SMEs in their national economies and to boost trade cooperation among them and in the wider Black Sea region.