



**PRESS RELEASE**  
**ON THE INFORMAL ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BSEC WITH THE COEST**  
**WORKING PARTY OF THE EU COUNCIL OF MINISTERS**  
*(11 December 2020)*

The informal annual meeting of the BSEC Organization with the COEST Working Party of the EU Council of Ministers (*The Working Party on Eastern Europe and Central Asia*) was held online on 11 December 2020.

The meeting was divided in four parts: (a) a representative of the Romanian BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office presented the priorities and activities of the latter, (b) the PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES portrayed the overall picture of BSEC PERMIS activities and, especially, the recent developments in its cooperation with the EU (c) representatives of the European Commission and the European External Action Service described the EU's approach towards the Black Sea region, including recent and potential activities in the field of Blue Economy and the EU response to the COVID-19 pandemic (d) many participants exchanged views and proposals on the issues discussed.

In his speech, the Secretary General stressed that the content of the annual BSEC - COEST meetings had radically changed during recent years, becoming useful occasions for decisive discussions and practical deliberations on concrete, tangible and mutually beneficial initiatives and projects. He further underlined that BSEC is committed to continue cooperating with the EU in an open, mutually beneficial and balanced way; BSEC Member States wish to be involved in the formulation and implementation of good practices or projects that concern the Black Sea region, because regional ownership and bottom-up approaches are the only way to lasting and sustainable development achievements in the region.

During the last part of the event the participants took the floor and reiterated the significance and usefulness of this annual informal meeting, which provides a valuable and convenient framework for a regular overview of what has been achieved and for a useful exchange of views and proposals on further promoting the BSEC-EU cooperation.

All the participants concurred that the relationship between BSEC and the EU has attained a level which has to be preserved and further enhanced, as a concrete contribution to the promotion of peace, stability and prosperity in the Black Sea region.