



**PRESS RELEASE**  
**ON THE BSEC ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE 2021 ITF ANNUAL SUMMIT**  
*(17-28 May 2021, Online)*

Invited by the Presidency of Ireland at the *International Transport Forum (ITF)*, the BSEC PERMIS participated in the *2021 ITF Annual Summit on Transport Innovation for Sustainable Development: Reshaping Mobility in the Wake of Covid-19*, which was held on 17-28 May 2021 in a virtual format.

Around 1800 delegates, among which 54 ministers responsible for transport from ITF member countries and beyond, and 24 heads of international organizations attended this leading global platform engaging decision-makers from industry, civil society, media and academia to discuss the future of transport and mobility.

The Summit explored how innovation can contribute to enhancing sustainability of transport infrastructure and services, and what governance framework is required to enable this. The Summit program featured numerous sessions designed around five broad thematic pillars: connectivity and resilient infrastructure; universal access and social inclusion; environmental sustainability; safety and security; governance. It also examined the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on innovation in transport and mobility, and highlighted options for the way forward towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The ITF Ministers of Transport have agreed to use recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic to transform transport. In their unanimously agreed *Declaration on 'Transport Innovation for Sustainable Development: Reshaping Mobility in the Wake of Covid-19'*, Ministers noted that *"the recovery from this pandemic offers new opportunities to reshape transport systems and shift to more resilient, efficient, sustainable and equitable mobility"*.

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES, participated in the **Open Ministerial Session**, held on 27 May, during which the Ministers from official delegations of the ITF members, observers, guest countries and intergovernmental organizations had an interactive discussion following presentations from industry leaders with all Summit delegates in attendance.

In his intervention Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES underlined that the improvement of regional connectivity is one of the most important issues for the BSEC Organization, which highly values its collaboration with the ITF and many other international organizations, which is gaining more dynamism. In this regard, he referred to the BSEC participation in the previous ITF Summits, including with its own Stand. In what concerns the current Covid-19 crisis, the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General emphasized that *'the pandemic has put international multilateral cooperation to a new and a very severe test'* and *'has showed very clearly the need for more cooperation and coordination not only between states, but also within states. This crisis has provided us all with lessons for how world leaders should approach other issues of global scale, such as climate change'*.



As in 2018 and 2019, the BSEC PERMIS participated in the ITF 2021 Summit with its own **Stand**, with the objective to present to the broader international public information on the Organization's history, its activities in the area of transport, major BSEC transport projects, their state of implementation, as well as present-day and future plans concerning the overall transport and trade facilitation in the region.

On 19 May the BSEC Stand was visited in virtual mode by the ITF Secretary-General, Mr. Young Tae KIM, who discussed online with the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES the perspectives for further strengthening cooperation between the two Organizations. Both sides exchanged information regarding their respective activities, priorities and plans for the immediate future and underlined that there are many issues and challenges of common interest in the vital sector of Transports, where possible joint efforts of BSEC and ITF could be of paramount significance.

The BSEC presence at the Summit proved once again to be a very effective tool for presenting to the rest of the world the Organization's activities and achievements in the key-sector of transports and for enhancing the visibility of the BSEC Organization.