



ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Permanent International Secretariat

BS/WGCT/R(2024)2

**REPORT
OF THE MEETING
OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP
ON COOPERATION IN TOURISM**

Online, 3 December 2024

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism was held online on 3 December 2024.
2. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Jalil MALIKOV, Deputy Head of Administration, Head of International Relations Department, State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan.
3. Opening remarks were made by the BSEC PERMIS Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dimitrios RALLIS on behalf of Secretariat and Mr. Jalil MALIKOV on behalf of Country-Coordinator. Both speakers emphasized the role that BSEC Organization is called upon to play in fostering cooperation and knowledge sharing among the BSEC Member States.
4. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the following BSEC Member States:
 - Republic of Armenia
 - Republic of Azerbaijan
 - Georgia
 - Hellenic Republic
 - Republic of Moldova
 - Republic of North Macedonia
 - Romania
 - Russian Federation
 - Republic of Türkiye
 - Ukraine
5. The following BSEC Related Bodies attended the Meeting:
 - Parliamentary Assembly of BSEC (PABSEC)
 - International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS)
6. The representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt attended the meeting as the BSEC Observer.
7. The following BSEC Sectoral Dialogue Partners attended the Meeting:

8. The List of Participants is attached as **Annex I** to the present Report.

AGENDA ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

9. The Draft Agenda of the Meeting was discussed and adopted. The Agenda, as adopted, is attached as **Annex II**.

AGENDA ITEM 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UPDATED BSEC ECONOMIC AGENDA “TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE OF THE WIDER BLACK SEA AREA”

10. The Working Group took note of the information provided by the Secretariat on the importance of the implementation of the BSEC Economic Agenda, more precisely the relevant provisions listed in *GOAL 8: Development of Tourism, Protection of Cultural Heritage and Promotion of Modern Culture*, as a platform for a more productive, effective and constructive cooperation for achieving tangible results.

11. In this context, the BSEC PERMIS recalled the necessity of consolidating the project-oriented dimension of BSEC activities by implementing existing and identifying new projects of common interest to Member States to reinforce economic cooperation in the region.

12. In addition, the Working Group took note of the information provided by the BSEC PERMIS on the state of affairs regarding the latter’s cooperation with the Secretariat of the *United Nations Tourism*, based on the relevant Memorandum of Understanding and their Sectoral Dialogue Partnership status in BSEC.

13. Furthermore, the BSEC PERMIS briefed regarding its participation in the Iter Vitis Conference Wine and Cultural Tourism: Fostering Economic Sustainability and Cultural Diplomacy Across Europe, held on 18-19 October 2024 in Chisinau (Republic of Moldova), and highlighted the opportunities for further strengthening cooperation in this regard.

AGENDA ITEM 3: CONSIDERATION OF THE ACTION PLAN FOR THE PERIOD OF 1 JANUARY 2023 – 31 DECEMBER 2024 DEVELOPED BY THE STATE TOURISM AGENCY OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN, THE CURRENT COUNTRY-COORDINATOR OF THE WORKING GROUP

14. Under this Agenda item, the representative of the Country-Coordinator evaluated the activities of the Working Group during the coordination period, including the organization of the First Meeting of the Higher Education Institutions Specialized in Tourism Education in the BSEC Region, held in Baku on 22-23 April 2024, identifying concrete opportunities and challenges for a stronger cooperation within the Working Group.

15. The Working Group finalized the adoption of the Plan of Action of the Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism for the period of 1 January 2023 - 31 December 2024, developed by the Republic of Azerbaijan, as the Country-Coordinator of the Working Group. The Plan, as approved by the Working Group, is attached as **Annex III**.

16. In this respect, the Working Group expressed its appreciation for the overall work of the delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan during the coordination period, and warmly

welcomed the next Country-Coordinator of the Working Group – the Republic of Armenia and wished them success in their upcoming work.

AGENDA ITEM 4: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN TOURISM SECTOR IN THE BSEC REGION – SHARING INFORMATION AND BEST PRACTICES TO GENERATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIP WITHIN THE WORKING GROUP

17. Following the conclusions of the last meeting of the Working Group, the participants continued to exchange views on recent developments in their respective countries and provided a comprehensive overview of the initiatives and activities of their relevant Ministries and agencies that have been implemented to better respond to current needs and support sustainable development of tourism.

18. In this context, the Working Group took note of the information provided by the representative of the Country-Coordinator on the First Ministerial Meeting on Enhanced Climate Action in Tourism, organized within the COP29 Tourism Day events in Baku on 20 November 2024. The same delegation called on the BSEC Member States to support the “COP29 Declaration on Enhanced Climate Action in the Tourism Sector”, which has been endorsed by over 60 countries so far, to set forth clearer pathways for enhancing the sector’s contribution to sustainable environmental practices.

19. Additionally, the Working Group took note of the presentations and statements provided by the following delegations, namely the Hellenic Republic, the Republic of North Macedonia, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, including on the proposals for further initiatives within the BSEC Working Group.

20. Further on, the Member States and partner organizations were invited to communicate to the BSEC PERMIS their proposals to the BSEC Calendar of Events activities for the first semester of the years 2025.

21. In the same vein, the Member States were reminded to use the frame of their respective international events (exhibitions, fairs, conferences and similar events) and to introduce, if applicable, a dedicated BSEC section as a good platform to promote the BSEC Region. Accordingly, the relevant authorities of the BSEC Member States were invited to regularly inform the PERMIS in advance of similar events to be organized in their countries and whether this possibility actually exists.

AGENDA ITEM 5: COOPERATION WITH REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PARTNERS

22. The representative of the *International Centre for Black Sea Studies* (ICBSS) informed regarding the relevant ICBSS’s activities.

23. Furthermore, the representative of the UN Tourism, while reaffirming their readiness to enhance cooperation with the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism, briefed on their flagship initiatives and activities that have been recently carried out, as well as global trends and strategies aimed at building a stronger and more resilient tourism sector. Along the same lines, outcomes of the 8th UN Tourism Global Conference on Wine Tourism organized in cooperation with the Government of the Republic of Armenia on 11-13 September 2024 in Yerevan, the World Tourism Day hosted in Georgia on 27 September 2024, and of the inclusion of “Climate Actions in Tourism” in the COP29 Agenda under the Presidency of the Republic of Azerbaijan, were presented.

AGENDA ITEM 6: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

24. The Chairman announced that the Republic of Azerbaijan will host the 71st meeting of the UN Tourism Commission for Europe (CEU) in Baku, to be held in June 2025, providing an additional platform for fruitful collaboration among the BSEC Member States.

AGENDA ITEM 7: ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

25. The Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism adopted the present Report for its submission to the next Meeting of the BSEC Committee of Senior Officials.