

# News from the Black Sea

## Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation

Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS)



### 38th MEETING OF THE BSEC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Yerevan, 27 June 2018)



The 38th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) was held in Yerevan, on 27 June 2018.

In addition to Ministers and Heads of Delegations from the BSEC Member States, representatives of the BSEC Related Bodies, Observers and Sectoral Dialogue Partners also participated at the Council Meeting.

The Ministers highlighted the importance of further enhancing regional economic cooperation in the wider Black Sea area.

At the closing session, the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs adopted Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations on various issues, including:

- the approval of the important “BSEC Green Energy Strategy”;
- the granting of the Observer status to Hungary, a vital partner for promoting cooperation in the adjacent Danube region;
- the renewal of the Observer status of the Arab Republic of Egypt and of the Republic of Austria, two States with which BSEC is cooperating for many years;
- the renewal of the Sectoral Dialogue Partnership of Japan.

At the conclusion of the meeting, a ceremony took place whereby the Republic of Armenia handed over the Chairmanship-in-Office of BSEC to the Republic of Azerbaijan, which assumed its duties for a period of six months, starting 1 July 2018.

## OFFICIAL START OF THE AZERBAIJANI CHAIRMANSHIP-IN-OFFICE OF BSEC

*(July – December 2018)*



*“Boosting Trade through Connectivity”*

With the motto *“Boosting Trade through Connectivity”*, the Azerbaijani Chairmanship got officially underway during the *“Coordination Meeting of the BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office, the BSEC Committee of Senior Officials, BSEC Related Bodies and the BSEC PERMIS”* held at the BSEC Headquarters in Istanbul, on 12 July 2018.

H.E. Mr. Anar HUSEYNOV, Director of the Department of Economic Cooperation and Development at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, presented the Priorities of the Chairmanship to the participants of the above-mentioned meeting.

He underlined that at the core of its Chairmanship, Azerbaijan will place the objective of further strengthening the BSEC Organization, streamlining the ongoing work for achieving its aims and objectives as described in the *“BSEC Economic Agenda: Towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership”* and in the Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations adopted by the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. For more information please refer to the *“Priorities of the Chairmanship”* on the following link: [www.bsec-organization.org/chairmanship](http://www.bsec-organization.org/chairmanship)

The Azerbaijani Chairmanship-in-Office of BSEC will cover the period from 1 July to 31 December 2018. In addition to the Meeting of the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Baku, 1<sup>st</sup> decade of December 2018), the relevant dense calendar of events includes Meetings of the Ministers responsible for Transports and for Culture, as well as a Ministerial Meeting on ICT Promotion, which constitute the highlights for the semester of the Azerbaijani Chairmanship. The BSEC Calendar of Events is available on the following link: [www.bsec-organization.org/events](http://www.bsec-organization.org/events)



## BSEC CHARTER



### **The month of June this year marked the 20th anniversary of the signing of the BSEC Charter!**

On this solemn occasion the Secretary General of the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat, Ambassador Michael B. Christides, addressed the following official letter to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of all BSEC Member States:

“Excellences,

The month of June this year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the BSEC Charter. Its adoption and subsequent entry into force has transformed the *Black Sea Economic Cooperation* initiative into a fully-fledged inter-governmental Organization with international legal personality and a significant role on the world-scene. During all these years the BSEC Charter has served as the firm institutional foundation of the Organization, enabling its development into a mature and internationally respected Establishment promoting cooperation and understanding in the geostrategic region of the Black Sea.

This is, indeed, a moment for celebration; yet, it is also a moment to consider and reassess the achievements of the past 20 years, set out our new goals for the future and carefully plan for their implementation.

Times have changed from the distant 1998 and BSEC, as every other Organization, has to adapt to the new, demanding circumstances and developments. How can we better respond to all the challenges of our time? I believe that it can only be through increased interaction, enhanced coordination and constructive dialogue, leading to a focused and result-oriented cooperation. Our BSEC Organization is the perfect, indeed, is the only, regional vehicle for achieving the above, especially if we help it function in a more productive and efficient way.

Thus, the celebratory spirit of this important anniversary should be embraced by also responding to the challenge of keeping the Organization as effective and efficient as contemplated by its Founding Fathers. The ongoing process of overhauling some of its statutory documents is an important step to that end. Based on my experience after serving for the last three years as the Secretary General of the PERMIS, I believe that we can attain the remaining steps to be taken.

Bearing in mind the above challenge, I wish to congratulate You on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the BSEC Charter and seize this opportunity to express my sincere hope for Your continuous active contribution to the joint effort of strengthening our Organization and turning the BSEC Region into one of peace, stability and prosperity, as laid down in the BSEC Charter.

Sincerely, Ambassador Michael B. Christides, Secretary General of the BSEC PERMIS”.



## MEETINGS OF THE MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF TOURISM OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

(Varna, 14 June 2018)

Almost at the beginning of the new tourism season in most of the BSEC Member states, the Ministers and Heads of delegations from the latter met in the beautiful city of Varna, on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast. The Ministerial Meeting was preceded by that of the relevant Working Group, during which many important proposals and decisions have been made, which were consequently adopted by the Ministers and Heads of Delegations. The latter underlined their intention to strengthen Tourism cooperation among BSEC Member States, as well as to make sustainable Tourism one of the major drivers of the socio-economic development in the Black Sea region.

In this direction, they adopted *"The Joint Varna Declaration of the Ministers in charge of Tourism of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation"*, which constitutes a new step forward in the long story of cooperation in the field of Tourism.



The Secretary General of the BSEC PERMIS, Ambassador Michael B. Christides, stressed in his statement the need for concrete deeds and project-focused action, appealed for a greater "sense of ownership" towards the BSEC Organization from its Member States and asked the latter to consider the Organization as a useful vehicle for regional Tourism cooperation, taking advantage of the possibilities it can offer in this respect.

## 10<sup>th</sup> WORLD CONGRESS ON HIGH SPEED RAIL (HSR) AND TRADE EXHIBITION (Ankara, 8-11 May 2018)

*"A fast, safe and reliable rail connection between cities and different countries is of paramount importance if we wish to de-congest our clogged routes and highways from trucks and private cars".*

These were the words of the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. Christides, who was invited to act as the Co-Moderator of one of the three high-level Round Tables - *"How Can High Speed Rail (Re)-shape Local and Regional Development?"* - of the prestigious 10th World Congress on High Speed Rail and Trade Exhibition Congress, organized by the International Union of Railways (UIC) and the Turkish State Railways (TCDD).



The Congress attracted many participants of international importance in the field of Transports, while the exhibition was a very interesting showcase of the great leaps forward that research and technology have achieved also in the HSR sector.

The most common denominator of the participants' interventions was that the development of *High Speed Rail* (HSR), if well-researched and well-prepared, could offer many advantages to the economy of a state, in many and diverse sectors, like transport, trade, industry, tourism, science and technology, etc. It was generally acknowledged that HSR not only does re-shape local and regional development but, in fact, it helps to the establishment of a completely new "development ecosystem".

In his address, Ambassador Christides pointed to the Republic of Turkey as a bright example for the advantages gained by the introduction and development of HSR. He expressed the hope that, for the faster promotion of regional integration and cooperation, other BSEC Member States will follow Turkey's example, because the region covered by the territories of the BSEC Member States straddles three continents (Europe-Asia-Africa) and is already a very important transport and energy hub.

## THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE “RISK MANAGEMENT LEADERS IN ENERGY”

(Istanbul, 15-16 May 2018)

An interesting and timely International Conference under the title “*Risk Management Leaders in Energy*” took place in Istanbul on 15-16 May 2018. The event was organized by the “*Institute for Energy and Finance*” (IEF) from Russia, in collaboration with the “*Institute of Risk Management*” (IRM) from the UK and its Regional Group in Turkey, with the support of the Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation.

The main aim of the Conference was to provide a platform for an exchange of international experience in risk management - in the broadest sense of the term - and for the introduction of best practices in what concerns Energy Risk Management.

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. Christides, informed participants on the energy issues BSEC mainly deals with: Energy conservation, Energy efficiency and alternative sources of Energy. He pointed out that the “high-politics” concerning production, transport

and distribution of oil or natural gas are beyond the competence of the BSEC Working Groups dealing with Energy matters.

He underlined that, as Energy risk-management, industrial, informational and ecological safety are issues that highly affect the every-day life of the average citizen in the wider Black Sea region, the BSEC Organization could perhaps offer valuable support to the solution of some of these problems, given the experience it has gained on the ground and the “culture of dialogue” that it was able to establish in the area.



THE ANNUAL SUMMIT OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT FORUM (ITF)  
(Leipzig, 23-25 May 2018)



*“The BSEC Organization: point of reference for regional cooperation”.*

With the above sentence on the head of its separate Stand, BSEC PERMIS participated in the 2018 edition of the *Annual Summit of the International Transport Forum (ITF)*, held in Leipzig, Federal Republic of Germany, from 23 to 25 May 2018.

The Summit was attended by 1400 participants and more than 40 Ministers from all over the globe. It focused on *“Transport Safety and Security”* and addressed issues ranging from road safety, terrorism and cyber-security to the elimination of physical and non-physical barriers on transports.

A large number of prominent personalities as well as representatives from the transportation sector paid a visit to the BSEC Stand, where they were provided with video-printed- and E-material concerning the Organization’s history, its major transport projects, their state of implementation, as well as the present-day and the future plans concerning the overall transport and trade facilitation in the region.

This first-time-presence of the BSEC PERMIS with a separate Stand at the ITF proved to be a very effective initiative, as it enhanced the overall visibility of the Organization and helped it reach a larger and specialized audience for promoting its achievements in the Transport sector.

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General participated in the Ministers’ Roundtable entitled *“Overcoming barriers to fair, secure and efficient international road transport”*, attended by the responsible Ministers of five BSEC Member States. Participants discussed the relevant priorities of their respective countries and organizations, as well as their efforts to formulate and implement best practices in order to eliminate existing barriers that even today cause great delays and losses in working-hours, money and time.

The PERMIS Secretary General underlined the role of the BSEC Organization for the promotion of joint projects, which facilitate trade and transportation among its Member States and beyond.



Considering the geostrategic importance of the BSEC region, he stressed that removing obstacles and barriers there, would also greatly enhance the overall connectivity between Europe, Asia and Africa. He appealed to interested stakeholders to take greater advantage of the experience and know-how that BSEC has accumulated during its 26 years of fruitful activity in the sector.

On the sidelines of the Forum Ambassador Christides met with H.E. Mr. Ramin Guluzade, Minister of Transport, Communications and High Technologies of the Republic of Azerbaijan, in order to

discuss and exchange views concerning the forthcoming Azerbaijan BSEC Chairmanship (second semester 2018).



## THE 22nd ST. PETERSBURG INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC FORUM

(St. Petersburg, 24-26 May 2018)



The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. Christides, was invited for the first time to participate in *the 22<sup>nd</sup> St. Petersburg International Economic Forum*, a prestigious event providing every year a unique platform for engagement of global business leaders, high representatives of Governments, experts and journalists to address, debate and seek effective solutions to the pressing issues concerning the global and the Russian economy.

During the Forum, the Secretary General had the opportunity to engage in productive networking with a great number of participants and, thus, further advance the visibility and promotion of the BSEC Organization among the highly qualified visitors/participants to the Forum.



Further, the BSEC Secretary General gave a 30-minute interview to the renowned TASS News Agency, during which he had the opportunity to describe in length the activities of the BSEC Organization and the latter's significance as a point of reference for economic cooperation and, thus, as a promoter of dialogue and understanding in the volatile region of the Black Sea.

Ambassador Michael B. Christides was also interviewed by the Press Service Chief of the VALDAI DISCUSSION CLUB from Moscow and by the Chief Correspondent in Russia of the ASKANNEWS.

## THE 2nd BALKANS AND BLACK SEA COOPERATION FORUM

(Athens, 30 May – 1 June 2018)



The 2<sup>nd</sup> “*Balkans and Black Sea Cooperation Forum*” was held in Athens on 30 May – 1 June 2018. The Forum is an independent, non-governmental, non-partisan economic platform, powered by private and public institutions and supported by a number of international organizations, aiming at identifying, strengthening and promoting economic relations, business opportunities, cross-border cooperation and sustainable development across the Balkans, the Black Sea region and beyond.

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. Christides participated in the last day's Session, under the title: “*Maritime, Transports, Infrastructures: Rail, Road, Rivers Connectivity*”.

Ambassador Christides underlined that the BSEC Organization has achieved a lot during its 26-years of activity in what concerns the facilitation of Transports and Trade in the region and beyond; yet, he added, there is still a lot to be done, if the overall Transports situation in the geostrategic region of the Black Sea is to reach the levels of other developed regions in the world.

He stressed that it is time to concentrate more on deeds than on words, even more so, because the basic legal framework and the necessary mechanisms already exist – the BSEC Organization being one possible vehicle for achieving the desired levels of regional and international cooperation in the economic field.

### THE EUROPEAN MARITIME DAY 2018 (EMD)

(Burgas, 31 May – 1 June 2018)



*“Generate investment and increase cooperation for an economic boom of the Black Sea region”.*

Upon the invitation of the DG MARE (European Commission), the BSEC PERMIS took part in the “European Maritime Day 2018” (EMD), held in Burgas, Republic of Bulgaria, on 31 May – 1 June 2018. The event was co-organized by the European Commission and the Bulgarian Presidency of the European Union.

The BSEC PERMIS was involved in the organization of two Workshops: one dealing with “Sustainability in Marine and Coastal Tourism”, and the second dealing with “Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture”.

The EMD was capped by a Black Sea Ministerial Meeting in which all Black Sea littoral States, plus Moldova, participated and during which the “Ministerial Declaration towards a Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea” (The Burgas Declaration) was adopted. The Declaration expresses the positive will of the participating States for developing a regionally owned and promoted common maritime agenda for the Black Sea.

In his speech during the Ministerial meeting, the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General stressed the significance of the “Blue Growth” as an open and real bottom-up endeavor. It is focused on the individual experiences and needs of littoral States and their ambition is to formulate a common, regionally-owned agenda, through the implementation of concrete schemes and projects.



## HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON BLACK SEA FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

(Sofia, 6-7 June 2018)

**I**t is estimated that fisheries constitute an important source of food and income for about 12% of the world's population!

The *General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean* (GFCM) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forestry of the Republic of Bulgaria organized the “*High-Level Conference on Black Sea Fisheries and Aquaculture*” in Sofia, on 6-7 June 2018.

The Conference aimed at discussing the main issues affecting the fisheries management and the perspectives for the responsible development of aquaculture in the Black Sea. The Conference was attended by the representatives of ten BSEC Member States, the European Commission, the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution, FAO, GFCM and BSEC.

In his statement the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General highlighted the special importance that the BSEC Organization attaches to the promotion of joint activities in the field of fisheries and aquaculture in the Black Sea region. Ambassador Christides made reference to the activities of BSEC, specifically mentioning the *International Conference on Fisheries and Blue Growth*, which was held in Istanbul in early November 2017, organized by BSEC and the Sariyer Municipality, which considered the main issues affecting fisheries management, the environmental and socio-economic impact on fisheries and aquaculture and the perspectives of development of these sectors in the Black Sea area. He expressed the hope that some of the important conclusions of the BSEC Conference could be considered as a contribution to the efforts of so many stakeholders in order to reverse the declining trend of fish stocks in the Black Sea.

On a more practical level, the Secretary General proposed to the GFCM and to the European Commission to convene next year, a joint BSEC-EC-GFCM scientific workshop/seminar on environmental issues and their socio-economic impact on living marine resources and ecosystems in the Black Sea, to be organized back-to-back with the “*2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Fisheries and Blue Growth*” in Istanbul in 2019.

Ambassador Christides also suggested that the very sober and informative film produced by the GFCM and shown during the high-level meeting could be transmitted by the national TV Channels of all BSEC Member States, in order to sensitize and inform their respective public on the serious issues that need to be urgently addressed.



### 33RD MEETING OF THE BSEC-URTA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(Sofia, 8 June 2018)

#### **Faster, safer and more competitive transports in the wider Black Sea region!**

This is the common objective BSEC shares with the BSEC-URTA, which held the 33<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of its General Assembly in Sofia, on 8 June 2018.

Invited by the Organizers, the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General stressed in his opening remarks the importance BSEC PERMIS attaches to its cooperation with BSEC-URTA.

He assured participants that the PERMIS is supporting the legitimate proposals and requests of the Associations of BSEC haulers directly involved in national and international road transports and confirmed that PERMIS will continue to coordinate its relevant efforts for achieving the common objectives of the two entities.

Upon concerns raised during the Meeting on the long delays noted at various border crossing points due to the heavy traffic of trucks, Ambassador Christides requested further data on the issue, so that PERMIS could propose its inclusion in the Agenda of the next Meeting of the Ministers responsible for Transports and that of the relevant BSEC Working Group.



It was generally accepted that delays as the above hurt Transport companies and exporters/importers in the Black Sea countries, but also the overall economy of BSEC Member States and should be addressed at the highest possible level. It was agreed that, however much we improve and upgrade the necessary infrastructure, the need to address the bureaucratic obstacles remains very urgent.

The great number of participants and the lively deliberations that took place during the meeting confirmed again that the BSEC-URTA is a dynamic and active Union representing its Member Associations from the BSEC States in the best possible way.

## 13TH CONGRESS OF RECTORS FROM THE BLACK SEA UNIVERSITIES NETWORK (BSUN)

(Thessaloniki, 18-19 June)



The importance of finding new ways of cooperation between Universities and Governments was one of the main issues raised during the “13<sup>th</sup> Congress of Rectors from the Black Sea Universities Network (BSUN)”, which took place in Thessaloniki on 18-19 June 2018, in parallel with the International Conference under the title “UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in the Black Sea Region: from Science to Implementation”.

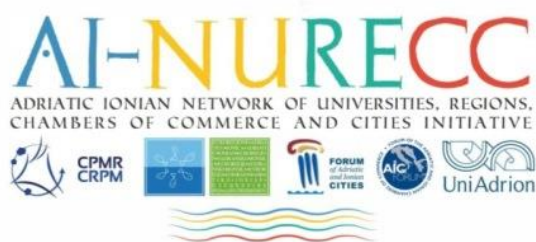
The BSUN was established as an ad hoc International Organization in 1998, following the relevant proposal of the PABSEC Committee on Culture, Education and Social Affairs. BSEC PERMIS decided to enhance its collaboration with the BSUN International Secretariat in the field of higher Education and together with Prof. Dr. Eden MAMUT, Director of the BSUN, elaborated a wide range of possibilities for cooperation and coordination, especially on issues concerning higher Education and Science & Technology.

In his opening statement at the above event the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General underlined that representatives from the BSUN, whenever useful, can participate in meetings of the relevant BSEC Working Groups, thus, complementing the efforts of both sides and enhancing the effectiveness of their efforts.

During the Meeting of the Rectors, many interesting views were exchanged on how to increase and deepen cooperation among the BSUN Member Universities. Among the various issues discussed was that of the freedom – and its limits - enjoyed by Universities as vehicles molding, in many ways, the future of mankind. It was argued that if we wish to preserve, in a sustainable way, Life and Nature for the next generations, then today’s “*techno-centered*” development should become more *nature-protective*. Participants also agreed that BSUN should focus on establishing better collaboration and co-education relations among its members, also by jointly using infrastructure and capacities, whenever possible.

Participants underlined the importance of finding new ways of cooperation between Universities and Governments, as there is still a lot of “misunderstanding” characterizing their relations. Ambassador CHRISTIDES reflected that the BSEC Organization and its relevant WGs could play a positive role in this issue, being an inter-governmental entity promoting cooperation and coordination among State authorities and other institutions, like Universities. He mentioned the need for securing new funding sources for joint projects and informed participants on the *Black Sea Project Promotion Facility* (BSPPF), which can finance projects with a distinct influence in the economic development of the region and which involve entities from more than one BSEC Member States.

During the Congress, the Presidency of BSUN for the next two years (2018 – 2020) passed to the Rector of the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki, Prof. Pericles A. Mitkas.



### **WORKSHOP ON CRUISE TOURISM IN THE ADRIATIC-IONIAN AREA**

*(Ancient Olympia, Greece, 27 June 2018)*

The BSEC PERMIS is preparing to jointly organize with the UNWTO and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey, an International Conference to attract cruise tourism in the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean (Istanbul, spring 2019-TBC).

For the sake of networking with interested stakeholders, PERMIS Executive Manager, Ambassador Bratislav Dordevic participated at the Workshop on “*Cruise sector in the EUSAIR area: challenges and future perspectives*”, held in Ancient Olympia, Greece, on 27 June 2018.

The Workshop focused on the advantages and disadvantages of cruise tourism. Many challenges in the field of cruise tourism were identified, like: infrastructural issues; developing sustainable tourism into “smart” tourism; diversification of seasonality; establishing a brand name, etc. In response to the challenges, various possible solutions were suggested, like: more funding; formulation of a common strategy; use of local products by the cruise companies; better “branding”.





**MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE OCCASION  
OF THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING  
OF THE DANUBE CONVENTION**

*(Belgrade, 29 June 2018)*

The “Ministerial Conference on the Occasion of marking the 70th Anniversary of the Signing of the Belgrade Convention Regarding the Regime of Navigation on the Danube” took place in Belgrade, on 29 June 2018.

The Conference was held under the heading “*Strengthening Partnerships for Freedom of Navigation on the Danube*”.

Statements were made by Mr. Gordan Grlic Radman, President of the Danube Commission and by the heads of delegations of the Member States of the Commission, assessing the latter’s activities and putting forward ideas and proposals for improving the common regulations in order to enhance the safety and security of the Danube navigation. PERMIS was represented by the Deputy Secretary General, Ambassador Traian Chebeleu.

At the end of the Conference a Communiqué was adopted summarizing the main ideas put forward in the interventions.

In the afternoon of the same day, the regular “90th Session of the Danube Commission” took place.

The Commission adopted the Working Plan for the forthcoming period of one year, as of 30 June 2018. The latter makes a special reference to the continued cooperation of the Danube Commission, based on the arrangements in force, with the International Sava River Basin Commission and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.

**VISIT OF STUDENTS FROM THE  
SUMMER SCHOOL OF YEDITEPE  
UNIVERSITY TO THE BSEC PERMIS  
HEADQUARTERS**

*(Istanbul, 9 July 2018)*

**BSEC** keeps up with its tradition to welcome students from various Universities.

A group of students from the summer school on *“Modern Integration Processes: European Integration and Rivalry between Regional Integration Systems in the South Caucasus”*, organized by the Network for Developing European Studies in the Caucasus and hosted by Yeditepe University in Istanbul, visited BSEC premises on Monday 9 July 2018.

PERMIS representatives informed their guests on the history, the legal basis and functioning, the current and future activities of the BSEC Organization, as well as on BSEC’s relations with other regional and international organizations.



After the presentations a lively question & answer session was held, during which pertinent queries on the role and mission of the Organization raised by the young students were comprehensively answered by the Secretary General and BSEC PERMIS staff members, underlining the “economic” identity of BSEC.

Ambassador Christides reiterated the usefulness of such visits for both sides and confirmed the willingness of the Secretariat to continue hosting similar events for students in the future.

**BSEC - FAO WORKSHOP  
ON THE PROMOTION OF AGRI-  
FOOD TRADE IN THE BSEC REGION**  
(BSEC Headquarters, 10-11 July 2018)

Views and thoughts on issues that constitute the main constraints to further enhance the intra-regional trade in Agri-food were shared during the “BSEC-FAO Workshop on the promotion of Agri-food trade in the BSEC Region” organized by the Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS) of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) at the BSEC Headquarters in Istanbul, on 10-11 July 2018.

The Workshop was the second “chapter” envisaged in the BSEC - FAO *Letter of Agreement* (LoA), signed between the two sides in December 2017, following the elaboration of a detailed Report and analysis on intra-BSEC trade in Agri-food, which constituted the first “chapter” of the Agreement.

Participants of the Workshop followed a detailed presentation on the aims of the joint FAO - BSEC project and, especially, on all



the data collected and analyzed in the above Report, which was prepared by an international consultant, under the supervision of the BSEC PERMIS.

Following the Workshop, a number of viable and important for the region ideas/recommendations will be carefully selected by PERMIS, in coordination with FAO, from the main conclusions arrived at during the Workshop, with the view to formulate a final “Project Proposal” for the promotion of Agri-food trade in the BSEC Region; the elaboration of this project proposal constitutes the third and last “chapter” included in the above mentioned Letter of Agreement.

