

News from the Black Sea

Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation

Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS)



Message of the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu

Dear Readers,

We have the pleasure to share with you the 19th issue of the “News from the Black Sea” which is also the first of 2022 - the year of BSEC’s 30th Anniversary.

Indeed, BSEC - the first and oldest full-fledged Organization in the Black Sea area - was born in 1992 with the shared vision of its Member States for a common future that would transform the region into a zone of peace, stability and prosperity through mutual economic cooperation. During these 30 years, BSEC has

asserted itself as a mature, inclusive and institutionalized Organization which has been instrumental in the promotion of regional cooperation and economic development.

Unfortunately, today as we prepare to acknowledge the achievements of our Organization during its three decades of existence, we, the BSEC PERMIS, are deeply concerned by the grave developments and war taking place in our region which has been causing loss of innocent lives, immense human suffering and material damage.

It is our earnest desire that by the time this issue reaches its readers, reason and wisdom, dialogue and diplomacy will have prevailed for an urgent ceasefire, the cessation of hostilities and an end to the bloodshed. A genuine solution to the crisis can only be one fully compliant with international law. A very much needed return to an environment conducive to constructive economic

engagement for the benefit of all Member States and the peoples of the region as a whole, would thus be possible.

Dear Readers,

You will find in the current issue an overview of the activities and events that took place in the months of January to March 2022. It is also referring to BSEC's 30th Anniversary and the Summit dedicated to it, envisaged to be held in Istanbul on 27 June 2022.

We kindly invite all our readers to join us in spreading the news about this Anniversary on their social media accounts by kindly using hashtag #30thAnniversaryBSEC.

May peace prevail in the Black Sea.

Ambassador Lazar Comanescu

HEADLINES

- **Coordination Meeting of the Moldovan BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office**
- **Working visits to BSEC capitals**
- **Courtesy visits and consultations at the BSEC Headquarters**
- **Energy**
- **Environmental/Maritime issues**
- **Tourism**
- **Transport**
- **Other events**



Coordination Meeting of the Moldovan BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office

The Moldovan Chairmanship (1 January- 30 June 2022) held the first official (online) meeting of its term-in-office, the "Coordination Meeting with the BSEC Committee of Senior Officials, the BSEC Related Bodies and the BSEC PERMIS" on 25 January 2022.

The State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, H.E. Mr. Vladimir Cuc, presented the Moldovan Priorities under the motto "30 Years of BSEC" and stated that the Moldovan Chairmanship would focus on the following topics:

- Promoting cooperation in Environmental Protection and Blue Economy, Transport, Trade and Connectivity, as well as Culture and Tourism;
- Streamlining the project-oriented dimension of the Organization;
- Further increasing the visibility and activities of the Organization;
- Enhancing cooperation between the BSEC and the Related Bodies, Observers, Sectoral Dialogue Partners, as well as other Regional and International Organizations, including further developing BSEC-EU interaction.

H.E. Mr. Vladimir Cuc also stated that Moldova is looking forward to working closely with the host country the Republic of Turkey and the BSEC PERMIS in organizing a Summit in Istanbul to commemorate the 30th BSEC Anniversary.

For full text of the Moldovan priorities please visit:

<http://www.bsec-organization.org/chairmanship>

WORKING AND COURTESY VISITS

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu continued to pay working visits to a number of capitals of BSEC Member States.

Visit to Chisinau



The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu paid a visit on 15 February 2022 to the Republic of Moldova, Chair country of the BSEC for the first semester of 2022.

Ambassador Comanescu was received by H.E. Ms. Natalia Gavrilita, Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova and had a working meeting with H E. Mr. Nicu Popescu, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. The discussions were focused on the implementation of the priorities and program of work of BSEC under the Moldovan CIO. The organization in June of a BSEC Summit as well as modalities to further increase the efficiency of the BSEC's activity and its role in enhancing economic cooperation in the Black Sea Region were also among the topics discussed.

Ambassador Comanescu also had meetings with Mr. Sergiu Harea, President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Moldova, and Mr. Adrian Lebedinschi, Head of the Delegation of the Republic of Moldova to the Parliamentary Assembly of the BSEC.

Visit to Ankara



The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu paid a visit to Ankara on 17-18 February 2022, where he met (on 17 February) with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, H.E. Ambassador Faruk Kaymakçı at a working lunch. The two sides exchanged views and discussed various issues related to BSEC, focusing mainly on the preparations and possible deliverables of the Summit to be held on the occasion of the 30th BSEC Anniversary.

On 18 February a meeting was organized with the Ambassadors in Ankara of the BSEC Member States. The meeting took place under the format of a working breakfast co-hosted by the Secretary General and H.E. Dmitri Croitor Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova, the current BSEC Chairmanship-in- Office.

The event was honored by the participation of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, H.E. Ambassador Faruk Kaymakçı.

Ambassador Croitor made a presentation of the Priorities of the Moldovan Chairmanship-in-Office, while Ambassador Comanescu gave an overview of plans and expectations for the current year marking the 30th Anniversary of BSEC.

He also underscored his intention to work closely with the Member States and requested their support in commemorating this important year.

Deputy Minister Ambassador Kaymakçı welcomed the initiative to bring together the Ambassadors of the Member States at the first ever BSEC Breakfast, also a first in person meeting after a long interval due to the pandemic, and expressed the hope that it would become a tradition by each new Chairmanship.

It was announced at the event that the 30th Anniversary Summit would be held in Istanbul on 27 June 2022.

While in Ankara, Ambassador Comanescu also met bilaterally with the ambassadors of France, Germany and the EU as well as with the head of the office of the Council of Europe.



Visit to Yerevan



Upon the invitation of H.E. Mr. Ararat Mirzoyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu paid a working visit to Yerevan on 22-24 February 2022.

Secretary General Lazar Comanescu was received by H.E. Mr. Mher Grigoryan, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, and had a working meeting with H.E. Mr. Ararat Mirzoyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and H.E. Mr. Vahe Gevorgyan, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

During the meetings both sides highlighted the particular significance of the 30th BSEC Anniversary, with particular focus on the organization in June 2022, of a BSEC Summit in Istanbul. Possible ways for further increasing the efficiency of the work of the Organization, including through the reinvigoration of the BSEC Business Council, strengthening BSEC's project-oriented dimension and depoliticization of its activities, the need to update the BSEC Economic Agenda were also among the topics discussed.

The Secretary General also met Mr. Hakob Vardanyan, Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructures, Mr. Babken Tunyan, head of the Armenian Parliamentary delegation to PABSEC, and Mr. Nerses Karamanukyan, Vice-President of the Union of Manufacturers and Businessmen of Armenia (UMBA).

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu received several visitors during the period covered by this edition.



Courtesy visit by the Consul General of the French Republic, Mr. Olivier Gauvin, 12 January 2022.



Courtesy visit by the Consul General of the Republic of Albania, Ms. Blerta Kadzadej, 8 February 2022.



Visit by the Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to the Republic of Turkey, H.E. Dmitri Croitor, 9 February 2022.



Visit by Mr. Selçuk Akat, Member of the Board of Directors of the BSEC Business Council (BSECBC), 1 February 2022.



Visit by Ambassador Volkan Bozkır, Member of the Grand National Assembly of the Republic of Turkey and former President of the UN General Assembly, 17 March 2022.



Visit by Mr. Nuri Önügören, Head of Diplomatic Relations Commission Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (MÜSİAD), 28 March 2022.

ENERGY

Webinar on Green Energy in the BSEC Region and Beyond



The Ministry of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of the Republic of Armenia and the BSEC PERMIS co-organized on 4 March 2022 a webinar entitled “Green Energy in the BSEC Region and Beyond” which brought together government officials from the BSEC Member States, Related Bodies, energy sector, national associations, research and educational institutions, private sector and civil society to exchange views on how renewable energy and low-carbon alternatives can help

nations achieve sustainable economic development and realize the long-term vision of transforming the wider Black Sea Region into a model for clean energy.

Welcoming the participants, the Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure of the Republic of Armenia H.E. Mr. Hakob Vardanyan stressed the importance of the renewable energy sector.

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu expressed his conviction that investments in Green Energy are crucial for the modernization of the energy sector and for achieving the SDG 7 Goal as well as for economic growth, job creation and increasing energy security.

The panelists discussed the national and international trends in the energy transition and clean energy sector as well as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the energy sector and the prospects for its development in the post-pandemic period.

ENVIRONMENTAL/ MARITIME ISSUES

Black Sea React

The BSEC PERMIS, together with the Sariyer Municipality, organized on 18 January 2022 an awareness raising campaign within the “Black Sea React!” project co-funded by the European Commission and coordinated by the BSEC PERMIS.

The event was held as part of an awareness raising campaign among the younger generations about the issue of marine litter and specifically the recycling of plastic litter and abandoned fishing gear.



An educational/informative kit containing a story book “Atto and the Clean Sea” which is a unique story created by the BSEC PERMIS, a diary, as well as other related gadgets recycled and produced from the collected old fishing nets and plastics litter.

The “Black Sea React!” event was attended by the Mayor of Sariyer Mr. Şükrü Genç, the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu, the US Consul General Ms. Daria Darnell and several guests from the Istanbul diplomatic corps, the BSEC Related Bodies, Observers and Sectoral Dialog Partners. Welcoming the guests, Mr. Şükrü Genç, said that the Black Sea React Project will create awareness on the negative effects of ghost nets and plastic litter on the marine environment, as well as help diminish the frightening amount of litter recklessly thrown into the sea.

Ambassador Lazar Comanescu made a statement and reminded that the BSEC Organization's aim is to continue raising awareness among the people of the BSEC Member States especially younger generation to reduce marine litter in the Black Sea and to encourage plastic recycling. He thanked partners for supporting the project's implementation.

TOURISM



Communities in the Black Sea Region

The final workshop on “Supporting Youth Entrepreneurship in Cultural Tourism for Coastal Communities in the Black Sea Region”, organized in the framework of the CulTourE4Youth Project, that runs under the coordination of the BSEC PERMIS, the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS), the Balkan and Black Sea Commission (BBSC) of the Conference of the Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR), and the Middle East Technical University Institute of Marine Sciences (METU-IMS) took place on 16-17 February 2022 in Batumi, Georgia.

The event brought together young entrepreneurs in the field, regional government stakeholders and representative of business,

academia and civil society from Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Turkey and Ukraine.

The two-day Workshop aimed to support and empower youth entrepreneurship in the tourism sector, especially in the Black Sea coastal communities, began with opening remarks by the representatives of the organizers and continued with informative presentations and fruitful discussions on the Blue Economy, sustainable tourism, blue skills and cross-border cooperation to support young entrepreneurs.

Building on the notion that cultural tourism with maritime dimension is an up-and-coming blue growth generator, the project provided background information and analysis on how youth entrepreneurship is promoted by existing policies and initiatives, and how it may be better supported to address local and regional challenges, such as youth unemployment and brain drain.

TRANSPORT



The BSEC PERMIS participated on 20 January 2022 in the “2022 ITF Annual Consultation with International Organizations”, held in a virtual format with the purpose to engage in a dialogue with partner international organizations on the main themes of the 2022 ITF Summit on “Transport for Inclusive Societies”. Given the thematic scope of the 2022 Summit, the Annual Consultation was dedicated to the most current and pertinent issues for transport policymakers such as climate change, supply chains, the transport labor force, urban mobility, and road safety, as well as governance as a horizontal theme across these five issues.

During his intervention on the topic of “Resolving the global supply chain crisis, creating more resilient and inclusive networks”, the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu underlined that since the beginning of the pandemic the BSEC Organization has covered considerable ground on the issue by actively coordinating efforts with its transport partner organizations, primarily the International Road Transport Union (IRU) and the Union of Road Transport Associations in the BSEC Region (BSEC-URTA). He further stressed that without urgent globally coordinated action, economies, employment and consumers will pay the ultimate price and global economic recovery will be placed at risk. He also said that road transport and deliveries by truck remain key to keep supply chains moving and must be supported by governments.

On 19 January 2022, the BSEC PERMIS also followed the ITF Consultation on Gender and Transport, focused on the ITF’s current work on the development of a Gender Analysis Toolkit for Transport Policies.



Ministerial segment Seventy-five years of ITC: Connecting Countries and Driving Sustainable Mobility

Ministerial Meeting of the 84th Session of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee (ITC)

The Ministerial Meeting of the 84th Session of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee (ITC) took place in Geneva on 21-25 February 2022 in a hybrid format, in commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the ITC.

The Ministerial segment, entitled “75 Years of ITC: Connecting Countries and Driving Sustainable Mobility”, was organized in three successive panels with the participation of prominent speakers and contributors. It provided an opportunity for reflection on the Committee’s past achievements, current performance and future prospects.

The opening statements were followed by the official launch of the Anniversary Publication “75 Years of ITC – 75 Documents that Changed the World of Transport”, which highlights the key moments of the history of the Committee, from its establishment in 1947, including the key legal instruments that paved the way for sustainable inland transport systems and transformed the world of transport.

In his statement in the first Panel on “ITC – The United Nations Platform to promote inland transport connectivity”, the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu congratulated the UNECE ITC on the occasion of its 75th Anniversary, pointing out that over the years this Committee has made a substantial difference in the European and Asian continents by facilitating trade and transportation and thus contributing to the prosperity and welfare of their peoples. In this context and reminding that year 2022 is a special one for BSEC itself in view of its 30th Anniversary, Ambassador Comanescu underlined that the BSEC has been closely cooperating with the UNECE on trade and transport facilitation since 1996 also making reference to the Cooperation Agreement between UNECE and BSEC dated 2001.

The Ministerial Meeting concluded with the adoption of the Ministerial Resolution on “Ushering in a decade of delivery for sustainable inland transport and sustainable development”.

OTHER EVENTS

Consultations with the European Institutions

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu visited Brussels on 26-28 January 2022, to participate in the informal annual meeting of the BSEC Organization with the COEST Working Party of the European Union Council of Ministers. On that occasion Ambassador Lazar Comanescu also bilaterally met with senior representatives of the European External Action Service (EEAS); the Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE); the Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR); the Russia, Eastern Partnership, Central Asia, Regional cooperation and OSCE, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the External Relations Section (REX).

The purpose of the meetings was to exchange views and ideas for further strengthening the cooperation between the BSEC Organization and the EU in areas of mutual interest such as blue growth, sustainable development, maritime affairs and people to people contacts.



Antalya Diplomacy Forum (ADF)

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu attended the “Antalya Diplomacy Forum” (ADF), held under the auspices of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and hosted by Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, on 11-13 March 2022. The three day event, under the main theme of “Recoding Diplomacy” was attended by representatives of 75 countries: 17 Heads of State and Government, 80 Ministers and the heads of 39 International Organizations.

Ambassador Lazar Comanescu, together with other high-level participants participated as a panelist in the discussions dedicated to the “Post-pandemic recovery, livelihoods and localities”, during which he highlighted that regional organizations need to establish institutions to facilitate trade, share best practices with each other and counter future pandemics. He also highlighted the need of appropriate coordination and correlation between actions taken at national level and those at local level. He was also speaker in the panel dedicated to “Recoding Diplomacy”

In the margins of the ADF Forum, Ambassador Comanescu also met with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, Ambassador Faruk Kaymakçı and exchanged views on the latest developments in the BSEC region.



Signing Ceremony of the “Amending Protocol to the Agreement on hosting the PABSEC Secretariat”

During the ADF Forum, a ceremony took place where the “Amending Protocol to the Agreement on hosting the PABSEC Secretariat” was signed by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs, Ambassador Faruk Kaymakçı and the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu with the presence of also the PABSEC Secretary General Mr. Asaf Hajiyeu.

5th Workshop for Young Diplomats

The fifth edition of the “Workshop for Young Diplomats” from the BSEC Member States on “Developing cultural diplomacy in the Black Sea Region”, jointly organized by the BSEC PERMIS and the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation, Turkey (KAS), was held on 21-23 March 2022 in Thessaloniki, the Hellenic Republic.

Along with the representatives from BSEC PERMIS and KAS, senior officials and high level experts from the host country, as well as representatives from the Council of Europe, the European Commission, academic and think tank institutions, attended the Workshop as speakers and moderators.

In their welcoming speeches the PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Lazar Comanescu and Mr. Walter Glos, Director of KAS (Turkey), underlined the importance of the Workshop as a precious “investment” for the future and a most valuable vehicle for promoting the spirit of friendship and good neighborliness between young diplomats from the BSEC Member States.

The Workshop provided an excellent opportunity to emphasize the importance of regional cooperation among the future foreign policy decision-makers in the Black Sea area.

A special panel devoted to BSEC’s 30th Anniversary and BSEC’s role for the regional cooperation took place on 22 March 2022 with the participation of the BSEC Related Bodies.

A simulation game on a “CSO Meeting on how to effectively promote the regional cooperation in the cultural sector in the Black Sea area”, conceived as way of introducing the participants to the objectives, procedures and functioning of the BSEC Organization took place on the last day of the Workshop.





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