

News from the Black Sea

Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation

Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS)



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Dear Readers,

We hope that after a well-deserved and pleasant summer break you are back in full readiness to well tackle your agenda for the last quarter of 2024.

As we, the BSEC PERMIS are also back to office, we would like to take this opportunity to thank our host country, the Republic of Türkiye, for their kind assistance in relocating us in new premises.

Dear Readers,

It is in this context that we have the pleasure to share with you the 28th issue of our “Newsletter” covering the July-October period and which provides as is the practice, a brief overview on the latest activities and developments in BSEC and the region.

As you know, in this second semester of the year the BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office is assumed by the Republic of Armenia, which exercises it under the motto “**Engagement, Outreach, Resilience**” and the commitment to support dialogue and exchange of best practices to advance equitable regional economic cooperation and sustainable development of the BSEC Member States (for further details please visit: [Priorities of the Chairmanship-in-Office](#)).

During this summer, a series of activities and meetings took place: My visit to Yerevan and the kick-off of the Armenian BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office (CIO); the Coordination Meeting of the BSEC CiO; the General Assembly of BSEC-URTA; BSUN 2024 Congress; the Coordination Meeting of the Regional Organizations and other events where upon further information may be found in our Newsletter.

Dear Readers,

Over the period covered by this edition of the Newsletter, serious challenges continued to exist in and affect our region. Unfortunately, there is still a war in our region. There are also conflicts and tensions in other places which, in a globalized world, impact everywhere.

In addition to that, our region has been confronted last summer too with natural disasters, namely wildfires in Albania, Greece and Türkiye which reminded us how important it is to protect and preserve our environment and to enhance the emergency assistance capabilities.

Last but not least, a terrorist attack that we strongly condemned took place on 23 October 2024 at a Turkish aerospace company in Ankara, resulting in innocent people killed and injured.

Needless to say, that for appropriately facing such challenges every effort deserves to be made to strengthen cooperation, not least at regional level and BSEC has been and will continue to be there to work hard for that in the Black Sea area.

Having said that, we hope you will enjoy reading the “News from the Black Sea”.

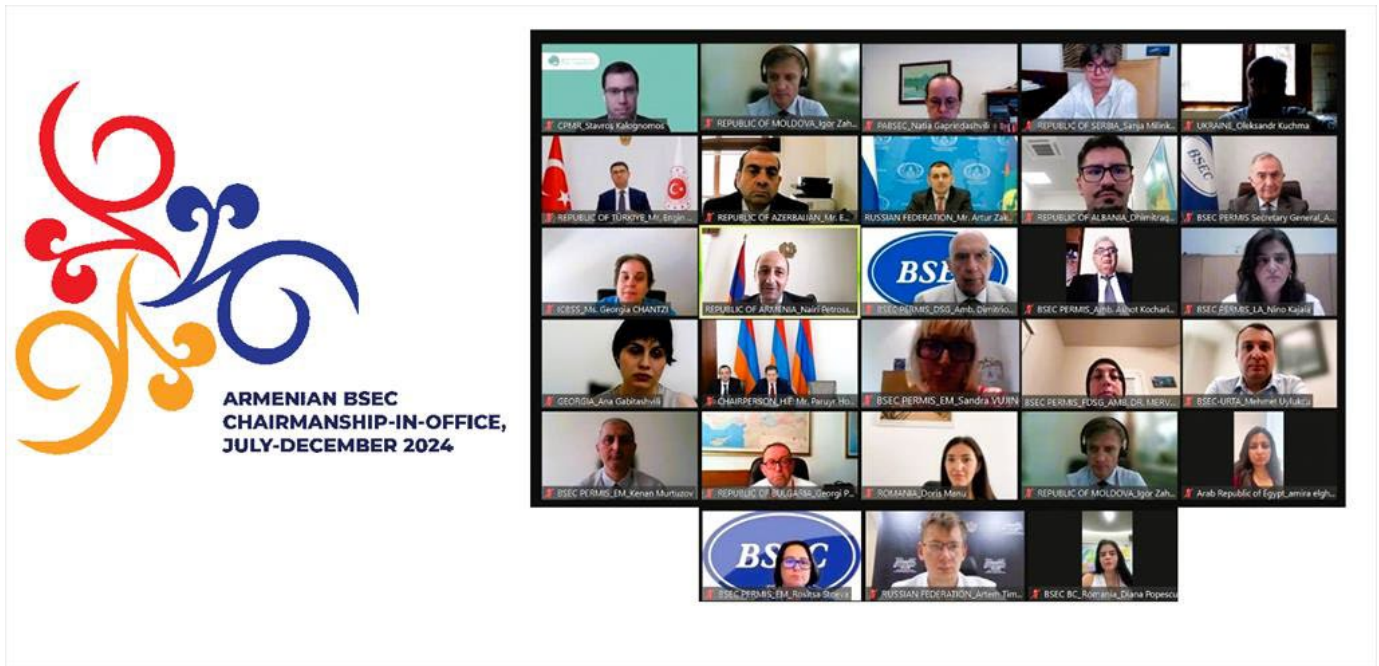
***Ambassador Lazar Comanescu
Secretary General***

HEADLINES

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- **Working visits**
- **BSEC Working Groups/Steering Committees**
- **Key events**
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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Coordination Meeting of the Armenian BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office (CiO) took place online, on 9 July 2024.



The CiO's priorities (1 July – 31 December 2024) with the motto "Engagement, Outreach, Resilience" were presented by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia H.E. Mr. Paruyr Hovhannisyian. H.E. Mr. Hovhannisyian emphasized on the importance of inclusive economic cooperation and trade facilitation for maintaining regional peace and stability. He also reiterated CiO's commitment to closely cooperate with BSEC Permanent International Secretariat, Member States and Related Bodies towards further improving the efficiency of the Organization and enhancing economic cooperation among the countries of the region.

For full text: [Priorities](#)

WORKING VISITS

Official Visit to Yerevan

Upon official invitation, BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu paid a working visit to Yerevan on 30 June - 1 July 2024, and was received by H.E. Mr. Nikol Pashinyan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, H.E. Mr. Alen Simonyan, President of the National Assembly, and H.E. Mr. Ararat Mirzoyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and BSEC Chairman-in-Office.

The Secretary General conveyed his best wishes of success and reassured of PERMIS's readiness to fully support and closely collaborate with the Chairmanship in fulfilling their mandate.

The Armenian side emphasized on the role of BSEC in promoting economic cooperation and on the fact that enhancing connectivity between the Member States is of particular importance. In this context, it informed about

“Crossroads of Peace” initiative of the Armenian Government.

The interlocutors exchanged views on developments and challenges in the BSEC region and on ways to appropriately tackle them.



Visit by H.E. Mr. Kevin Hamilton, Ambassador and Ms. Tara Scheurwater, Consul General of Canada (BSEC Headquarters, 23 September 2024)



Visit to the Mayor of Sariyer Municipality (Istanbul) Mr. Mustafa Oktay Aksu (18 October 2024)



A delegation from Konrad Adenauer Stiftung visited BSEC PERMIS on 3 October 2024. Exchange of views on current developments and regional cooperation in the BSEC region took place.

BSEC WORKING GROUPS/STEERING COMMITTEES

During the period covered by this Newsletter, BSEC PERMIS held a number of Working Group meetings covering such areas as Budgetary and Financial Issues, Emergency Assistance, Science and Technology, Seismic Risk, and Transport (Black Sea Ring Highway, Motorways of the Sea).

KEY EVENTS

Workshop for Young Diplomats

The 17th edition of the Workshop for Young Diplomats from the BSEC Member States, jointly organized by the BSEC PERMIS and the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation Türkiye (KAS), was held in Sofia on 3-5 July 2024 with the topic “Enabling Sustainable Blue Economy in the wider Black Sea Region”.

The Workshop provided the opportunity for the participants to get comprehensive information about and familiarize with the activities of BSEC and the importance of regional cooperation in the Black Sea area. It also enabled the participants to meet and interact with their counterparts from other BSEC Member States.

In their opening speeches, BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu and Mr. Walter GLOS, Director of KAS Türkiye, said events like this are a most efficient investment for the future and a vehicle for promoting the spirit of friendship and good neighborliness among young diplomats from the BSEC Member States.



BSUN 2024 Congress

The 16th Conference of Rectors from the Black Sea Region: BSUN 2024 Congress “Summit of the Future for the Black Sea Region” was held in Istanbul on 11-12 July 2024. This year's edition of the Congress addressed the main challenges and opportunities in the Black Sea region, particularly the role of education and universities in providing appropriate modalities and ways to tackle them.

Addressing the plenary, BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu highlighted the invaluable role and contribution of the academic community and universities to the common mission of the BSEC Organization in promoting cooperation, connectivity and good neighborly relations in the wider Black Sea area. He also emphasized on the importance of the economic dimension of security on the very important role of economic cooperation.



BSEC-URTA General Assembly



BSEC PERMIS attended the 44th Meeting of the BSEC-URTA General Assembly, held in Tashkent on 2 September 2024.

BSEC PERMIS Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dimitrios Rallis addressed the Assembly and highlighted the importance as well as the need by public national or international authorities and institutions to involve the business communities, private actors and their associations in shaping and implementing policies, decisions, and programs/projects. He underlined that the partnership of BSEC-URTA and IRU with BSEC provides a good example of cooperation of international organizations in providing analysis on trade and transport facilitation, initiating and implementing important projects such as the BSEC Permit System, digitalization of transport documents and border-crossing facilitation. BSEC PERMIS also took part in the Meeting of the IRU Commission on Customs Affairs (CAD), as well as in the Conference “International Road Transport: Driving Resilience and Prosperity. The road ahead: 75 years of TIR”.

Coordination Meeting of Regional Organizations

The 18th Coordination Meeting of Regional Organizations, hosted by the Central European Initiative (CEI), took place in Trieste on 17 September 2024, with the participation of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII), the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), the European Commission (Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations – DG NEAR), the Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA) and the Regional Anticorruption Initiative (RAI). The overall objective of the meeting was to exchange views and information on the activities carried out by each of these organizations as well as to discuss possibilities and modalities to further enhance synergies, interaction and coordination in areas of common interest such as connectivity, good governance, blue economy, SDGs, youth entrepreneurship, and project management.

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu highlighted the importance and benefits an enhanced cooperation and consolidated complementarities can bring to the activities of each organization.



CPMR General Assembly

The 52nd General Assembly of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) took place in Gozo, Malta on 2-4 October 2024.

The debates focused on issues like territorial cohesion, climate, sustainable Blue Economy, energy priorities and cooperation in green energy. In his contribution to the debates BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu, while highlighting the project and result-oriented cooperation between BSEC and CPMR which is an active Sectoral Dialogue Partner of BSEC, elaborated on BSEC activities in the area of energy with focus on promoting green energy.



Bridging Gaps in Coastal Restoration

BSEC PERMIS organized a scientific Workshop on “Bridging Gaps in Coastal Restoration. Synergies and Knowledge Transfer from REST-COAST project to the Black Sea region” in Thessaloniki on 8-9 October 2024. The event discussed how to bridge the gaps in coastal restoration from ecology, economy, engineering and society perspectives, with special focus on the Black Sea and the newly published booklet by the BSEC PERMIS: “The route to Coastal Restoration: From REST-COAST project to the Black Sea region”. The discussions concentrated on identifying barriers and enablers, strategies to overcome these challenges and assessing the global coastal protection benefits of wetland restoration. For more details on REST-COAST: <https://rest-coast.eu/>



High-Tech Summit for the Black Sea

BSEC PERMIS 2nd edition of the High-Tech Summit for the Black Sea took place in Sofia on 16 October 2024. It focused mainly on ocean digitalization and Industry 4.0., bringing together blue economy innovators from the Black Sea region and beyond, fostering dialogue among industry, academia, research organizations, investors, policymakers, and civil society.

The event was opened by BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu who, addressing the participants, stressed that BSEC Organization supports all activities aimed at sustainable Blue Economy developments in the Black Sea region. He referred in this context, to the PERMIS's active involvement in the drafting and endorsement in 2019 of the Common Maritime Agenda of the Black Sea (CMA), which is one of the best examples of a fruitful BSEC-EU interaction.

The Summit took place in interactive sessions offering opportunities for showcasing business ideas from the Black Sea Accelerator, projects, and matchmaking with partners and investors.



OTHER EVENTS

Yerevan Dialogue 2024 International Forum

The Yerevan Dialogue 2024 International Forum was held in Yerevan on 9-11 September 2024. The Forum, which brought together high-level participants, focused on the themes: interconnectivity, transition to green economy and to the future of energy, and digital society as a sustainable and safe driver for economy.

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu in his intervention as a panelist of the session on “Geopolitics of Connectivity: From Competition to Collaboration”, emphasized on the importance of connectivity which for BSEC has been a top priority area of its activities. He provided information on several important regional projects which are of major significance for the facilitation of transports and trade in the BSEC

region. While welcoming initiatives coming from the countries of the region, including the “Crossroads of Peace” project, Ambassador Comanescu stressed that enhancing connectivity contributes significantly to building confidence and promoting progress and prosperity in the entire Black Sea region and beyond.



**UNITED
CULTURES**

Xth International Cultures Forum

BSEC PERMIS Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dimitrios Rallis participated to the Xth International Cultures Forum held in Saint Petersburg on 11-14 September 2024. The main topic of the Forum was “The 21st Century Culture: Sovereign or Globalism?”.

Addressing the Heads of Delegations segment of the Forum, Ambassador Rallis highlighted BSEC’s role in promoting regional

economic and cultural cooperation, with focus on the unique cultural richness of the BSEC countries and the vast potential for further expanding this cooperation. A particular attention, he stressed in this context, should be given to protecting cultural heritage, preventing any illicit trafficking and protecting cultural property. He also stressed that strong economic and cultural cooperation contributes to better mutual understanding, good neighbourly relations and there through to stability and security.



Russian
Energy Week
2024

Upon invitation by the organizers, BSEC PERMIS Executive Manager in charge of energy Ambassador Ashot Kocharian participated in the Russian Energy Week International Forum 2024 held in Moscow on 26-28 September 2024. The generic topic of the Forum was “Energy Cooperation in a Multipolar World”.

The participants discussed issues such as challenges faced by the energy sector including development of gas, oil and coal industries,

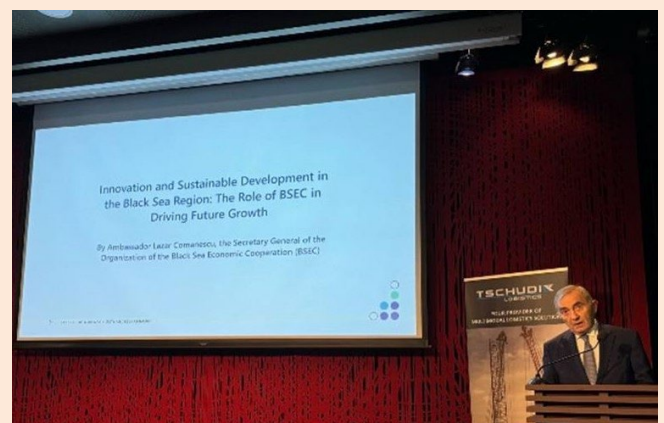
electricity, nuclear power, artificial intelligence, renewable sources of energy, climate change, as well as innovative solutions for energy transition.

Ambassador Kocharian had the opportunity to network and exchange views with participants on issues relevant for BSEC such as energy transition, cooperation for development, green energy and energy sustainability.

Black Sea Conference

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu participated in the Black Sea Conference organized in Oslo on 8 October 2024, dedicated to economic and business opportunities in the Black Sea region. He made a presentation on the structure and functioning of BSEC and elaborated on its activities and objectives for the years to come. He highlighted in this context the adoption, in December 2023, of the updated BSEC Economic Agenda and the approval in June 2024, of the mechanism for its implementation. Ambassador Comanescu also referred to the importance BSEC attaches to partnership and interaction with other international/regional organizations and actors.

In this context, he encouraged a direct interaction between East Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Norway (EAST CCI) and BSEC Business Council, respectively BSTDB.





The IRF 2024 World Congress took place in Istanbul on 15-18 October, under the generic topic “Connecting to Empower Mobility:

Roads as Enablers of a Sustainable Future for All”.

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Comanescu attended the Ministerial Session dedicated to the topic of “Decarbonized and Resilient Transport for Resilient Societies and Economies”. In addressing it, Ambassador Comanescu highlighted the particular importance BSEC is attaching to climate and protection of the environment and added that it is appropriately reflected in the new BSEC Economic Agenda, adopted in 2023. Ambassador Comanescu also referred to BSEC’s fruitful cooperation with IRF, developed on the basis of the MoU signed between the two organizations in 2006.

BSEC-URTA Management Council



The 64th Meeting of BSEC-URTA Management Council was held in Istanbul on 24 October 2024. The discussions focused on the European Entry/Exit System (EES), expected to be introduced by the EU as of 2025. An exchange of views took place there upon with focus on its possible impact on road transport industry, particularly for BSEC-URTA members and ways to mitigate that impact as well as to turning it into an opportunity.

In his remarks, BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu highlighted the importance of digitalization and other innovative tools for facilitating border-crossing procedures and transport of goods in the BSEC region.

PABSEC Committee for Legal Affairs

The 64th Meeting of the PABSEC Committee for Legal Affairs and International Cooperation took place in the city of Ioannina, Greece on 29-30 October 2024. The Committee considered the PABSEC Report and Recommendation on “The Legal Challenges of the Refugee and Migration Flows in the BSEC Region”.

BSEC PERMIS was represented at the Meeting by First Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dr. Merve Safa Kavakcı. Addressing the participants, Dr. Kavakcı highlighted the importance of close cooperation with PABSEC aiming to enhance regional cooperation in the BSEC area both at governmental and parliamentary levels. She



provided the meeting with a brief overview of the activities of BSEC for the period of last five months, as well as the current period, among which were the activities under Albanian Chairmanship-in-Office and ongoing Armenian Chairmanship-in-Office.

Visit to the ITF Headquarters

Invited by Mr. Young Tae Kim, Secretary General of ITF (International Transport Forum), BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu visited the ITF Headquarters in Paris on 30-31 October 2024. He participated in a conference and addressed as keynote speaker ambassadors and other diplomats accredited to ITF-OECD, on “Steering Stability-Cooperation for Transport Connectivity and Resilience in the Black Sea”. He informed the participants on BSEC’s role in promoting economic cooperation and the contribution there through to stability and security in the Black Sea area. The region’s key importance as multidimensional connectivity hub was also highlighted in this context as was the fruitful interaction between BSEC and ITF.



STAY IN THE KNOW

The World Bank approved on 14 September 2024, a \$6.39 million grant for the “Blueing the Black Sea (BBSEA)” Global Environment Facility (GEF) Regional Project. This initiative aims to combat pollution and promote eco-innovations in the Black Sea. By focusing on reducing eutrophication and enhancing regulatory frameworks, the project seeks to foster collaboration among governments, private sector, and international partners. It aims to create a cleaner, healthier Black Sea through strategic investments and knowledge sharing, benefiting both the environment and the local communities. The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) will implement the Project in close cooperation with BSEC PERMIS.



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