

News from the Black Sea

Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation

Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS)



PERMANENT INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT (PERMIS)



Dear Readers,

This is the first issue of 2025 of our Newsletter and as we are still at the beginning of the year, allow me to start by conveying to all of you best wishes of success in all your endeavors. I would also use this opportunity to thank our Member States, our Related Bodies, Observers, Sectoral Dialogue Partners, our partner organizations, last but not least, the BSEC PERMIS staff, for their dedication and support which allowed a smooth and successful functioning of our Organization in the year 2024. I am confident that will be the case for this year as well.

You may wish to know that throughout the first half of this year (1 January – 30 June 2025) the BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office is held by the Republic of Azerbaijan. Wishing them full success, we are looking forward to work under their valuable guidance towards making further advances in the fulfilment of the objectives of our Organization.

Dear Readers,

During the period covered by this Newsletter, a series of activities and many meetings took place. Some of the highlights are: the 49th Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States, BSEC PERMIS's Secretary General's participation to the COP 29; meetings of BSEC subsidiary organs; PABSEC General Assembly; BSTDB Board of Governors; ICBSS Board of Directors, and other events that you may read about in our Newsletter.

Unfortunately, serious challenges continue to affect our region. The war continued to be there and has seriously impacted it as it did on the activities of the Organization. We hope however that this year will bring those so much needed developments that are conducive to peace and cooperation in our region.

Dear Readers,

In the last days of 2024, BSEC PERMIS bid farewell to its Executive Manager Ms. Rositsa Stoeva. I use this opportunity to express my gratitude for her most valuable contribution to the work of the Organization, and wholeheartedly wish her all the best in her assignment at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria. I at the same time welcome her successor Ambassador Georgi Panayotov and wish him every success as member of PERMIS team.

To conclude, we hope you will enjoy reading the “News from the Black Sea”. And don’t forget to stay tuned with us via BSEC website and social media accounts!

Ambassador Lazar Comanescu
Secretary General

HEADLINES

- **In the spotlight**
- **Working visits**
- **BSEC Working Groups/Steering Committees**
- **Key events**
- **Other events**
- **Stay in the know**

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Forty-ninth Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (CMFA) of the BSEC Member States took place online, on 19 December 2024 and was chaired by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia H.E. Mr. Vahan Kostanyan.



The opening statements were delivered by H.E. Mr. Ararat Mirzoyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia/BSEC Chairman-in-Office, and by BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu. They were followed by the statements and debates of the Heads of Delegations of the BSEC Member States.

The participants of the Meeting once again emphasized on the important role the BSEC Organization plays in economic development and cooperation in the area and reiterated their commitment to the peace, security, stability and welfare of the region. They used this opportunity to express their high appreciation to the Republic of Armenia for its successful Chairmanship-in-Office of BSEC, and wished the forthcoming Chairmanship of Azerbaijan all the success in its activities.

The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs adopted Resolutions on the BSEC PERMIS Budget for 2025 and other financial and staff matters.

WORKING VISITS

Working visit to Baku

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu, paid a working visit to Baku on 30-31 January 2025 in the context of Azerbaijan's takeover of the BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office (CiO).

During his visit, he was received by and had

bilateral talks with Jeyhun Bayramov, Minister of Foreign Affairs and BSEC Chairman-in-Office; Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources; Minister of Energy; Chairman of the State Tourism Agency; Chairman of the State Agency for Public Service and Social Innovations; and the Deputy Foreign Minister.

The Secretary General briefed his interlocutors on recent activities and achievements of the Organization. He expressed his highest appreciation and thanks to the Azerbaijani Government for the importance it attaches to the BSEC Organization, and conveyed his best wishes for a successful Azerbaijani BSEC CiO.

The Azerbaijani side highlighted the role of BSEC and underlined the necessity to make use of the Organization's potential in order to achieve sustainable development in the region, including in the areas of transport and logistics, energy and tourism. Special emphasis was also made on environmental

and climate change-related agenda in the context of the current Azerbaijani Presidency in the UNFCCC COP29.



Visit by Dr. Ellinor Zeino, Head of the Turkish Office of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) (BSEC Headquarters, 29 November 2024)



Visit by TÜDAV Delegation led by Professor Bayram Öztürk (Head of TÜDAV) (20 December 2024)



Visit by a delegation from Maltepe University led by Rector Prof. Dr. Edibe Sözen (BSEC Headquarters, 14 January 2025)



Visit by Dr. Tamer Saka, Chair of the Board and Mr. Güray Karacar, Secretary General of the Corporate Governance Association of Türkiye (TKYD) (BSEC Headquarters, 16 January 2025)



Visit by Ambassador Aylın Sekizkök, Director General for International Economic Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye (BSEC Headquarters, 29 January 2025)

BSEC WORKING GROUPS/STEERING COMMITTEES

BSEC PERMIS also held a number of Working Group meetings covering such areas of cooperation as Agriculture and Agro-Industry, Banking and Finance, Education, Culture, Customs Matters, Exchange of Statistical Data and Economic Information, Information and Communication Technologies, SMEs, Tourism, Trade and Economic Development, Steering Committee on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region.

KEY EVENTS

COP29

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu participated in COP29 held in Baku on 11-22 November 2024.

Besides participating in the World Leaders Climate Action Summit, Ambassador Comanescu was a key speaker in the “Ministerial Forum on Green Good Governance” (14 November) where he highlighted the importance of the modernization through digitalization of the public service delivery and of the regional cooperation in the knowledge sharing.

Ambassador Comanescu also participated and delivered the opening address in the side event on “Financing the regional and transboundary cooperation in addressing climate change in the region”. This event focused on financing transboundary climate change adaptation.



United Nations
Climate Change



COP29
Baku
Azerbaijan



CEI Ministerial Meeting

The Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Central European Initiative (CEI) took place in Tirana on 20 November 2024. BSEC PERMIS was represented by Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu.

Ambassador Comanescu informed the participants about BSEC activities in the course of 2024 and stressed the importance of better correlation and synergy among the organizations that are operating in the region. He highlighted in this context the fruitful BSEC-CEI collaboration.



UNAOC Global Forum



BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu participated in the 10th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) held in Cascais, Portugal on 25–27 November 2024. The main topic of the Forum was “United in Peace: Restoring Trust, Reshaping the Future”.

In his intervention, Ambassador Comanescu referring to the fruitful cooperation between BSEC and UNAOC and the opportunities deriving from the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the two organizations, elaborated on the concrete activities carried out within this framework and prospects for further extending them particularly via joint projects and initiatives in the area of education and culture, to the benefit of the BSEC region.

BSTDB Board of Governors



The 26th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB) was held in Istanbul on 6 December 2024. This year's event marked the 25th Anniversary of the Bank's operations.

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Comanescu addressed the participants of the Board and underscored the role of BSTDB in further enhancing trade and economic development in the BSEC area. He highlighted, with reference to the current situation in the region, the necessity of bringing back peace and security as well as concrete proposals and projects aiming at reconstruction and economic development in the post-war Ukraine.

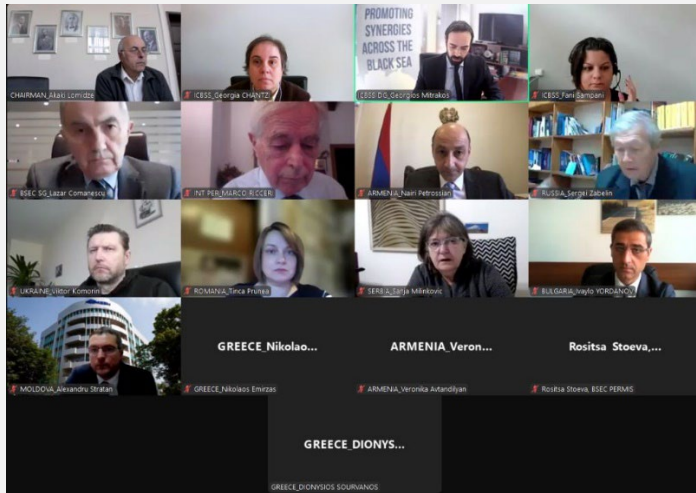
PABSEC General Assembly



The 64th Plenary Session of PABSEC General Assembly was held in Yerevan on 10-12 December 2024. The debates within the Session were on developments in the Black Sea area, with focus on issues such as development of transport infrastructure, facilitation of border crossing, protection of cultural heritage.

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Comanescu attended the Plenary and informed the participants about BSEC's activities. The Secretary General stressed the importance of the implementation of the revised BSEC Economic Agenda as well as the need of further strengthening the project-oriented dimension of the Organization.

ICBSS Board of Directors



The 53rd Meeting of the ICBSS Board of Directors (BoD), was held online on 10 December 2024. The Meeting focused on the main activities of the ICBSS since the last meeting in December 2023, as well as on the future activities for 2025.

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Comanescu highlighted the importance of the Center in pursuing a longer-term approach in the activities of BSEC, with particular attention to areas like energy security, digitalization, blue economy and climate change.

OTHER EVENTS

Conference on “Black Sea: Opportunities and Challenges for Euro-Atlantic Security”

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu participated in the Conference “Black Sea: Opportunities and Challenges for Euro-Atlantic Security”, organized in Rome on 7 November 2024. The Conference was held in two successive panels on strategies for a cooperation agenda, respectively Black Sea region's role in providing energy security.

In his address as keynote speaker, BSEC PERMIS Secretary General stressed the importance of the economic dimension of security and the need of fostering regional economic cooperation as a key contributor to enhancing

security. In this context, he highlighted the geo-strategic location and role of the Black Sea region as real hub in terms of global trade, transport and energy.



3rd International Congress Türkiye and Black Sea Oil and Gas 2024



The 3rd International Congress Türkiye and Black Sea Oil and Gas 2024 was held in Istanbul on 11-12 December 2024. The Congress was structured around a number of distinct thematic sessions.

Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dimitrios Rallis who represented BSEC PERMIS at the Congress, underlined that BSEC has over time built valuable partnerships and implemented projects of high relevance for the region in the energy sector. He emphasized on the need to accelerate electrification with renewables and electricity grids to achieve full decarbonization and energy self-sufficiency. He concluded by stressing the importance for the energy transition of developing innovative techniques of energy storage.

2025 ITF Annual Consultation with International Organizations



BSEC PERMIS participated online in the 2025 ITF Annual Consultation with International Organizations, hosted by OECD Conference Centre and held in hybrid format on 28 January 2025, in preparation of the forthcoming 2025 ITF Summit on “Transport Resilience to Global Shocks” (Leipzig, 21 - 23 May 2025) and the 2026 Summit on “Transport Resilience: Funding a Just and Green Transition”. The 2025 ITF Summit will explore how governments ensure the continuity of transport systems amidst current and future disruptions. The program will focus on key shocks such as natural disasters, pandemics, cyber-attacks, and geopolitical crises, which can cause operational delays, economic losses, and diminished public confidence.



BSEC PERMIS bid farewell to its Executive Manager Ms. Rositsa Stoeva and welcomed her successor Ambassador Georgi Panayotov.

STAY IN THE KNOW

At the Meeting on the Implementation of the Project “BSEC PERMIT System” held on 5 November 2024, delegations considered the usage of permits in 2024, and decided on the distribution of the 2025 permits with a barcode, their number per country, format of usage and other organizational aspects concerning their preparation and dispatch.



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