

# News from the Black Sea

## Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation

Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS)



PERMANENT INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT (PERMIS)



### Dear Readers,

We already left behind the first quarter of the year 2025 with a rather busy schedule. With the Republic of Azerbaijan as BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office in the first half of the year, and as established during the Coordination Meeting that took place in February, we avail of a consistent road map as well as of a calendar of events until end of June, which should enable our Organization further advancements in the fulfillment of its objectives. Indeed, working under the Motto “Strengthening

Connectivity, Driving Growth: Transport at the Core of BSEC’s Future”, the Azerbaijani Chairmanship aims at improving the efficiency of the Organization, as well as focusing on key priorities such as connectivity, facilitating trade and transport, promoting coordination and cooperation, climate change, and good governance. You may find further details on the priorities on the following link: <https://www.bsec-organization.org/chairmanship> and on the calendar of events on: <https://www.bsec-organization.org/Events>

### Dear Readers,

From February to April, a series of important activities and meetings took place: the Coordination Meeting of the Azerbaijani BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office with BSEC Member States, BSEC Related Bodies and BSEC PERMIS; the Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO); the Working Group on Transport; the 87<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNECE-ITC, the XII<sup>th</sup> Baku Global Forum, the 4<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum (ADF), etc.

BSEC PERMIS commemorated the International Women’s Day with this year’s theme being: *“For All Women and Girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment.”*

**Dear Readers,**

Unfortunately, there continues to be war in our region, which has been there for more than three years now, and that does not bode well with our goals. We desperately need peace to be brought back for the well-being of our nations. Alongside big losses of human life, the war has heavily impacted on the economic prosperity of the region. Economic cooperation and peace are interlinked, long term security can best be provided through strong economic interaction and cooperation.

**Dear readers,**

To conclude, we hope you will enjoy reading the “News from the Black Sea” and we will appreciate any feedback from you. 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**

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Coordination Meeting of the Azerbaijani BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office with the BSEC Committee of Senior Officials, the BSEC Related Bodies and the BSEC PERMIS, chaired by Mr. Emin Mammadov, Head of Regional Cooperation Division, Department of Economic Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan took place online on 10 February 2025.



The Chairmanship presented its priorities under the motto “Strengthening Connectivity, Driving Growth: Transport at the Core of BSEC’s Future”. Improving the efficiency of the Organization; good governance; connectivity; as well as environment and climate action are among the main priorities of the Azerbaijani Chairmanship.

For further information please visit the following links:

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

<https://www.bsec-organization.org/events/eventType/Upcoming>

[https://www.bsec-organization.org/uploadedDocuments/BSEC\\_Azerbaijan\\_Speech\\_Presentation.pdf](https://www.bsec-organization.org/uploadedDocuments/BSEC_Azerbaijan_Speech_Presentation.pdf)

## WORKING VISITS



*Angel Tcholakov, Ambassador of the Republic of Bulgaria in Ankara  
(BSEC Headquarters, 5 February 2025)*



*Ambassador Isiaka Abdulqadir IMAM, Secretary General of the Developing-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation (D-8)  
(BSEC Headquarters, 18 February 2025)*



*Courtesy visit to Mr. Davut Gül, Governor of Istanbul  
(Governorship, 4 March 2025)*



*Visit by Mr. Mehmet Uylukçu, Secretary General of  
BSEC-URTA  
(BSEC Headquarters, 6 March 2025)*



*Courtesy visit by Mr. Amer Kapetanovic, Secretary General of the Regional Cooperation Council  
(RCC) (BSEC Headquarters, 27 March 2025)*

## **BSEC WORKING GROUPS/STEERING COMMITTEES**

During the period covered by this Newsletter, BSEC PERMIS also held a number of Working Group meetings covering such areas of cooperation as Budgetary and Financial Issues, Energy, Transport, as well as the Steering Committee on the Project Development Fund.

## KEY EVENTS

### High-level Meeting of the 87<sup>th</sup> Session of the Inland Transport Committee of the UNECE-ITC



The High-level Meeting took place in Geneva on 11 February 2025, in the framework of the 87<sup>th</sup> Session of the Inland Transport Committee of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE-ITC), with the generic topic “Successes and Challenges for Inland Transport on the Road to 2030”.

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu attended the Meeting and addressed the round table dedicated to “Promoting Sustainable Regional and Interregional Transport Connectivity”. He highlighted the key role of the BSEC region as a connectivity hub, as well as BSEC’s activities and projects related there to. He stressed in this context the importance of enhanced cooperation and coordination with other regional/international organizations. Ambassador Comanescu also had bilateral consultations with the representatives of other organizations to explore ways for further deepening interaction with them.

### XIIth Baku Global Forum



The Baku Global Forum was held in Baku on 13-15 March 2025 with the participation of prominent representatives from various countries. The generic topic of the Forum was “Rethinking World Order: Turning Challenges into Opportunities” and focused on global issues such as the multipolar world order, the “UN Pact for the Future on Building a New Global Consensus”, post-conflict reconstruction and restoring regional stability.

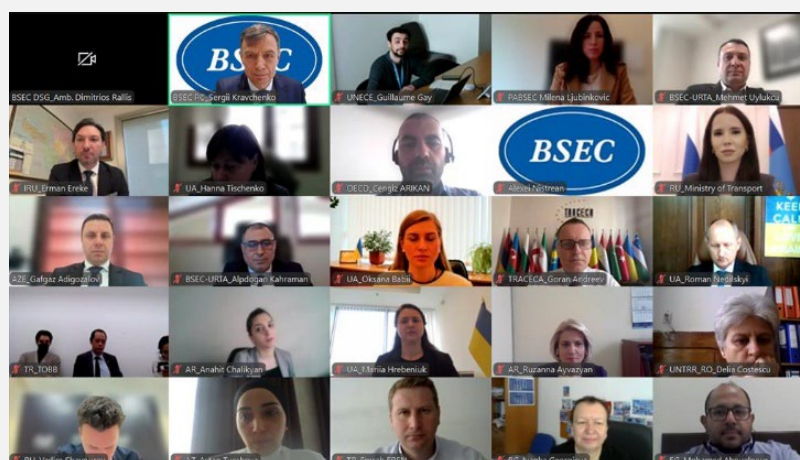
BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu, in his contribution to the Panel on “Rebuilding for Peace-Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Regional Stability”, highlighted the fact that cooperation is quintessential in the efforts towards providing stability and further stressed that post-conflict reconstruction needs a well-coordinated action by the international and regional organizations.

### Working Group on Transport

The Meeting of the Working Group was held online on 26 March 2025, with the participation of experts from the BSEC Member States, BSEC Related Bodies, Observers, as well as from international organizations.

The participants discussed recent developments in transport and logistics, new government policies and business measures affecting transport, road safety issues, practical ways on the introduction of advanced technologies responding to the needs of the BSEC region, development of road transport infrastructure and border-crossing facilitation measures in the BSEC region. Cooperation with international transport organizations, as well as other related issues were also discussed during the Meeting.

BSEC PERMIS Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dimitrios Rallis made a statement and stressed that joint efforts of BSEC and other international organizations, like UNECE, IRF, ITF, IRU, BSEC-URTA, OECD, TRACECA could be of paramount significance for decisively facilitating the trade and transport of goods in the wider BSEC region.



## REST-COAST General Assembly

The REST-COAST General Assembly Meeting was held in Catania, Sicily on 24-27 March 2025. As partner of the project consortium, BSEC PERMIS was represented in the Meeting by the Executive Manager in Charge of Project Management, Ambassador Georgi Panayotov. The Meeting took stock of the fourth year of the project's implementation with focus on RESTCOAST updates, challenges and future plans, and particularly progress towards the large-scale restoration activities.

A Steering Committee Meeting also took place on the same day, with discussions on the current status of restoration of the Pilot sites. Special attention was paid to the climate risk reduction through innovative restoration approaches. Financial/business plans for restoration upscaling were discussed as well.

## Antalya Diplomacy Forum

The Fourth Edition of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum (ADF) took place in Antalya on 11-13 April 2025.

This year's Forum was held under the theme "Reclaiming Diplomacy in a Fragmented World", and was attended by prominent representatives from a large number of countries and organizations. BSEC PERMIS was represented in the Forum by Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu who participated as speaker in the panel "Connectivity, Digitalization and Development".

More detailed information on the project can be found here: <https://rest-coast.eu/>



First Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dr. Merve Safa Kavakcı also attended the event.





### **BRAF Annual Meeting**

The Eleventh Annual Meeting of the Black Sea Broadcasting Regulatory Authorities Forum (BRAAF) was held in Baku on 14-16 April 2025. The main theme of this year's forum was "Protection of Children in Media Services". A two-panel discussion allowed experts to exchange ideas and ways through which an environment where children as minors of the society can be immune to the wrongdoers' activities in the virtual world including television and social media.

BSEC PERMIS was represented by First Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dr. Merve Safa Kavakcı, who during her opening speech stressed the importance of BRAAF as a sectoral partner to BSEC and informed the participants about the most recent developments and achievements of the Organization.

### **PABSEC Committee for Legal Affairs and International Cooperation**

The 65<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the PABSEC Committee for Legal Affairs and International Cooperation was held in Skopje on 29 April 2025, organized by the Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia. The Committee considered the PABSEC draft report and the draft recommendation on the topic of "International Cooperation in the Fight Against Organized Crime in the BSEC Region", and agreed to present them to the PABSEC General Assembly to be held in Baku on 18-19 June 2025.

BSEC PERMIS was represented at the Committee by First Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dr. Merve Safa Kavakcı, who made a presentation and updated the participants about BSEC activities since the 64<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee.



## OTHER EVENTS

BSEC PERMIS Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dimitrios Rallis had a working meeting on 6 February 2025 with Ms. Biljana Stefanoska, Director of the Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism of the Republic of North Macedonia, during which both sides exchanged their strategies, policies and objectives in the field of Tourism. The meeting also touched upon the potential arising from the region's rich and diverse tourist offer, cultural tourism, etc., recognizing numerous opportunities for close cooperation and the

implementation of projects of common interest.



### Institutional Renewal and Good Governance

The Webinar of the BSEC Working Group on Institutional Renewal and Good Governance, entitled “Developing and Employing Effective Citizen Relationship Management Systems in Public Service Delivery” was held online on 5 March 2025. It was dedicated to Developing and Employing Effective CRM Systems in Public Service Delivery. In their presentation, the participants shared their experience in this field, specifically on the monitoring and evaluation regulations, with a focus on the implementation of CRM systems, highlighting key initiatives in this area.



BSEC PERMIS Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dimitrios Rallis participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Burgas Business Forum held in Burgas on 14 March 2025. Discussions focused on the general economic challenges and opportunities for SMEs arising from the economic collaboration within BSEC.

In his presentation Ambassador Rallis referred to the importance attached by BSEC to the development and support of the SMEs sector in the region. He also underlined PERMIS's readiness to closer cooperation with its partners on further strengthening multilateral cooperation in the SMEs area, including access to finance, internationalization, promotion of e-commerce opportunities, empowering SMEs in their green transition, strengthening partnerships between businesses and governments.

## 7<sup>th</sup> ADA University Policy Forum

The 7<sup>th</sup> ADA University Policy Forum: “Shaping the New World Order: Sovereignty, Resilience, and Sustainability” took place in Baku and Khankendi (Azerbaijan) on 7-9 April 2025. Participants were comprised of members of academia, civil society, policy makers/members of the political realm, and media across the globe. They held discussions on matters such as changing global dynamics, the decline of unipolarity, energy security, and challenges attached to climate change.

BSEC PERMIS was represented in the Forum by First Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dr. Merve Safa Kavakcı who made an intervention on the panel discussion titled “The Role of Keystone States in Shaping Regional Security and Development”. She underlined BSEC’s commitment to partake in efforts to achieve sustainable and resilient economic development in the region and reiterated the crucial role organizations play in multilateral collaborations in an effort to bring stability to the region.



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BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu met on 16 April 2025 at the BSEC Headquarters, Mr. Fokion Zaimis, President of the Council of the Peripheral Maritime Regions – Balkan & Black Sea Commission. An exchange of views took place on this occasion on prospects for further strengthening BSEC – CPRM interaction as well as enhancing its project-oriented dimension.





A group of students from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki visited BSEC Headquarters on 28 April 2025. They were briefed on recent BSEC activities and projects.



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