

News from the Black Sea

Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation

Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS)



PERMANENT INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT (PERMIS)



Farewell Message of Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. Christides

Dear Readers of the “Newsletter from the Black Sea”,

On 30 June 2021 my second term as the Secretary General of the *Permanent International Secretariat of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization* (BSEC PERMIS) will come to an end; these have been six unforgettable years for me personally and, I hope, six important years for the further development of the BSEC Organization.

Despite the difficulties and severe challenges, I tried my very best and dedicated all my energy for the development of the BSEC Organization and for its establishment as a sought-after interlocutor and partner on the international scene. As I am sure you were able to confirm yourselves by reading the various issues of our “Newsletter”, today BSEC has matured into a trust-worthy regional vehicle for the implementation of various projects in different sectors, as well as into a valuable platform for more and better dialogue and understanding among its Member States and their people.

As a further recognition of its role and performance, the BSEC Organization has been recently honored with the 2021 “*Multilateral Peace Award*” of the prestigious “Goi Peace Foundation” because of its “*outstanding contributions to promoting multilateralism and fostering a culture of peace*”.

All the above would not have been possible without the unwavering support and commitment of my colleagues in the PERMIS, who I thank from the bottom of my heart!

I am honored and happy that Ambassador Lazar Comanescu from Romania, a distinguished and highly respected Minister and friend, will be taking over the reins of BSEC PERMIS; I am confident that under his inspired guidance “our” Organization will reach even higher peaks of effectiveness and performance.

Dear Readers, bidding a warm farewell to you all, I hope that you will continue being informed about the achievements of the BSEC Organization through the pages of this “Newsletter”,

Sincerely,

Ambassador M.B. Christides



BSEC PERMIS bid farewell to its Secretary General Ambassador Michael B. Christides and conveyed its sincere gratitude for his leadership and valuable contribution to the work of the Organization during his two term tenure.

Headlines:

- **43rd Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs**
- **BSEC Day – and the Ceremony of the Goi Peace Foundation**
- **New Article 24 of the Charter Enters Into Force**
- **Actions Rather than Words for the Blue Economy in the Black Sea Region**
- **Big Splash Event – Collection of Old Fishing Nets and Marine litter in the Bosphorus**
- **BBSEA Program Gets Excellent Feedback in Romania ‘National Consultation’ Session**
- **Save Our Sea Essay Competition**
- **The 4th International Conference on “Risk Management in Energy”**
- **BSEC Granted ‘Participative Status’ in the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe**
- **Moldova Tourism Forum 2021**
- **Global Tourism Forum**
- **37th BSEC-URTA General Assembly**
- **Conference on “Opportunities and obstacles: International road transport in the framework of TRACECA”**
- **BSRH Steering Committee**
- **XIth International Seminar on Trade and Transport Facilitation**
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- **Latest updates in BSEC areas of cooperation: Working Groups**
- **High-Level Conference for the Launch of the 1st Progress Report on Euro-Mediterranean Regional Integration**
- **Antalya Diplomacy Forum**
- **57th PABSEC General Assembly**
- **Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Central European Initiative**
- **MÜSiAD Diplomacy and Gourmet Meeting**

43rd Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs



The “43rd Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs” of the Organization of the BSEC was held online on 30 June 2021. H.E. Ms. Olta Xhaçka, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania and the BSEC Chairman-in-Office, chaired the meeting hosted by PERMIS.

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

At the opening, the Secretary General of the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat H.E. Ambassador Michael B. Christides presented a brief overview of the activities and achievements of the Secretariat during his two term tenure at the helm of the PERMIS coming to an end with the Council meeting. He also offered insight on the possible requisites to render the Organization more effective and efficient, following the experience acquired during his mandate.

The Ministers made statements on issues regarding the latest developments in the region and within the Organization. They praised the successful Albanian Chairmanship under the extraordinary circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic. They also expressed their appreciation for the valuable contributions of the outgoing Secretary General to the work of the Secretariat and in promoting the interests and image of the Organization.

The “*Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs*” adopted Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations on various issues on the agenda of the Organization. One of the main decisions being the Appointment of Ambassador Lazar Comanescu, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania to the position of BSEC PERMIS Secretary General for a three year term starting as of 1 July 2021. Member States extended a warm welcome to the incoming Secretary General and expressed their support for a successful tenure.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Republic of Albania handed over the Chairmanship-in-Office of BSEC to Georgia which assumes the Chairmanship as of 1 July 2021, for a period of six months until 31 December 2021.

BSEC Day – and the Ceremony of the Goi Peace Foundation Award

The Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation celebrated “BSEC Day” and its 29th year in promoting peace, stability and prosperity in the wider Black Sea region, at a reception held aboard the “*Sevgi and Barış*” cruise boat of the Sarıyer Municipality, on 25 June 2021.

This year BSEC has also been honored with the “*2021 Multilateral Peace Award*” by the prestigious Goi Peace Foundation in recognition of its outstanding contribution to promoting multilateralism and fostering a culture of peace. Mr. Patrick Uwe Petit, Representative to the United Nations, Goi Peace Foundation European Representative, presented the peace award to BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Michael B. Chistides, during the reception, held while sailing along the Bosphorus towards the Black Sea.



Following the unveiling of the “Peace Pole” inscribed with the words “*May Peace Prevail on Earth*”, both the Secretary General and Mr. Petit, made short speeches emphasizing the importance of regional peace and the contribution of organizations like BSEC to this goal.

For more details on BSEC’s award: <https://www.goipeace.or.jp/en/news/20210428/>

New Article 24 of the Charter Enters Into Force

One important development during the period covered by the current Newsletter relates to the entry into force of *New Article 24* of the Charter of the Organization of the BSEC.



The *New Article 24* regarding the status of the International Center for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) was adopted at the Special Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States held in Istanbul on 25 June 2004.

In accordance with Article 30 and Article 33 of the Charter, amendments to the Charter enter into force on the first day of the month following the date when nine Founding Members deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance or approval.

Until recently there were only eight Founding Members which had done so.

On 25 May 2021, Ukraine deposited with BSEC PERMIS the instrument of ratification of the *New Article 24* of the Charter. Nine Founding Members have thus expressed their consent to be bound by this amendment.

Consequently, pursuant to Article 33 of the Charter, the *New Article 24* entered into force *de jure* on 1 June 2021. This gives the ICBSS full legal status, enabling it to also make legally binding agreements on funding and participation in projects.

ENVIRONMENT

Actions Rather than Words for the Blue Economy in the Black Sea Region

A large international audience followed on 3 June 2021 a high-profile online discussion entitled “*Actions rather than words for the Blue Economy in the Black Sea Region*”, which was hosted by the BSEC PERMIS and the World Bank, with the organizational support of the Delphi Economic Forum. The event took place, in part, as a promotion of the “*Blueing the Black Sea*” project (BBSEA), which is being funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), supported by the World Bank and jointly implemented by BSEC PERMIS. It aims to combat marine pollution in the Black Sea and to catalyze Blue Economy activities.

In his opening remarks, BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. Christides expressed his deep satisfaction that BSEC PERMIS has assumed the responsibility to implement the *BBSEA program*.

Moderated by Mr. Spyros Kouvelis, Director of the EPLO Institute for Sustainable Development and former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Greece, the strong line-up of distinguished speakers included Mr. Teodor Melescanu, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania; Ms. Anna Diamantopoulou, President of DIKTIO – Network for Reform in Greece and Europe and former European Commissioner and Mr. Steven Schonberger, Regional Director, Sustainable Development Department for Europe and Central Asia, World Bank.

The panelists talked about the *BBSEA project* and also focused on a series of wider key themes: the importance of the *Blue Economy* for the sustainable development of the region, the implementation of the *Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) for the Black Sea* and on the need for regional infrastructure investments to support the goals on marine pollution, energy, tourism and culture.

They also suggested a number of concrete and practical ways the *Blue Economy* could be advanced in the Black Sea region. These included: education and training of the ‘human factor’, more knowledge sharing among states, adoption of reforms and innovation and further motivation for the private sector to invest in *Blue Economy* actions.



Big Splash Event – Collection of Old Fishing Nets and Marine litter in the Bosphorus

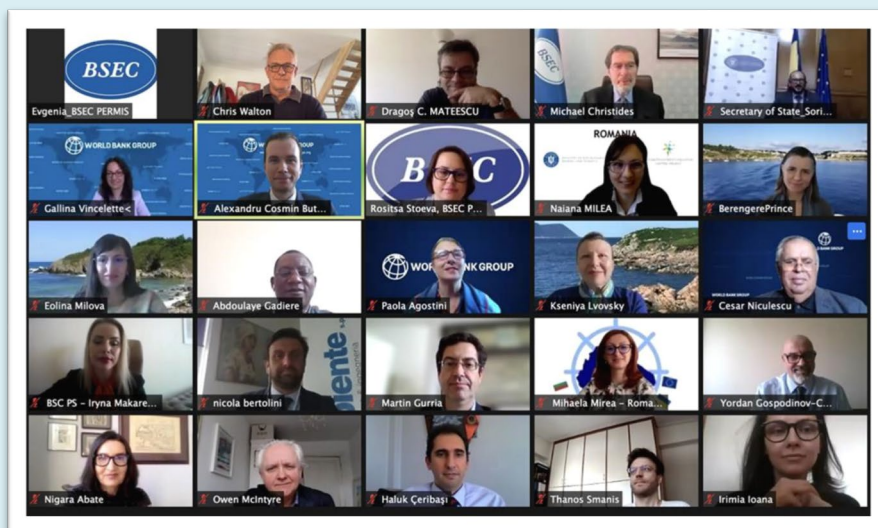
BSEC PERMIS kicked off its flagship “*Black Sea React*” Project to combat marine litter and plastics pollution with a pilot to collect old fishing nets and litter in the Istanbul Municipality of Sarıyer on 15 June 2021. The project, co-funded by the European Commission, aims to involve local fishermen in collecting old nets and recycling them into new, useful products for everyday life. The launch took place

aboard a cruise boat in the Bosphorus and featured a symbolic dive from Turkish World Free Dive Champion Şahika Ercümen who swept up some abandoned fishing nets from the seabed. It is hoped that similar old fishing net and plastics collections will now happen in a



number of municipalities in interested BSEC Member States around the Black Sea. The project will run for 15 months and is implemented in cooperation with the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS), the Turkish Plastics Association and the Plastics Europe Association. Several dignitaries were in attendance including BSEC Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. Christides and the Mayor of Sariyer, Mr. Şükrü Genç. The U.S. Consulate General in Istanbul is an Associate Partner of the project and the US Consul General, Ms. Dara Darnell was also at the launch. For full details of the pilot and the project: <http://core.bsec-organization.org/.../20210615-black-sea...>

BBSEA Program Gets Excellent Feedback in Romania ‘National Consultation’ Session



The latest in the series of “National Consultation” workshops under BSEC’s “Blueing the Black Sea Program” (BBSEA) was held on 22 April 2021. It featured the Government of Romania’s highly innovative “Integrated Nutrient Control Project” designed to reduce the discharge of nitrogen and phosphorous into the River Danube and the Black Sea. Through integrated land and water management, this world-leading initiative is bringing important environmental and social economic benefits to Romania.

The consultation session, organized in conjunction with the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests, and the World Bank, who are supporting the BBSEA and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) funding it, also took soundings from the online audience of Romanian public officials, academics, technical experts and businesses on the overall plan to tackle marine pollution and catalyze the Black Sea's *blue economy*. Through a highly interactive format, a series of excellent ideas were taken away to be incorporated into the program when it enters its implementation phase later this year.

In the Opening Remarks, Mr. Ionut-Sorin Banciu, Romanian Secretary of State for the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests, said the *BBSEA program* was vitally important for the country and the region under the *Common Maritime Agenda (CMA)* signed by the six Black Sea littoral countries and Moldova in 2019.

The session had nearly 100 participants and in closing, the World Bank's Ms Berengere Prince, one of the main figures in designing the *BBSEA program*, said the interest and commitment to the pollution problems facing the Black Sea came out extremely strongly, as did "Romania's leading role in promoting regional cooperation on these issues".

"Saving Our Sea" Essay Competition

As part of the BSEC PERMIS project "*Pilot innovative solutions for fighting marine litter in the Black Sea*", co-funded by the European Commission, PERMIS has launched an essay competition entitled "*Saving Our Sea: new ways to reduce marine pollution in the Black Sea*". It is aimed at high school students in BSEC Member States in order to raise awareness and motivate young people to take action against the growing marine pollution challenge in the Black Sea. Entries have to be written in English or Russian and submitted by 30 September 2021.



There are excellent prizes! Full details of the possible focus of the essay and how to submit entries:

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

ENERGY



The 4th International Conference on “*Risk Management in Energy-2021*” was organized by the Institute for Energy and Finance of the Russian Federation with the support of the Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation, online, on 18 May 2021. The Conference was attended by high-level officials from Ministries of Energy, representatives of business communities, international organizations and experts from research institutions.

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Michael B. Christides delivered his welcome address at the Plenary Session entitled “*The Global Energy after COVID-19: New Risks and Opportunities for Development*”.

Ambassador Christides underlined that this important annual event offered an excellent opportunity for international experts and stakeholders to discuss the latest developments in the global energy market in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. He emphasized the importance of the Energy sector as one of the key areas of cooperation among BSEC Member States particularly with regard to energy conservation, energy efficiency and alternative sources. He stressed that in order to reduce the negative impact of the pandemic, governments should urgently make the necessary interventions and offer attractive clean-energy incentives as well as encouraging more investments in “*Green Energy*”.

CULTURE AND TOURISM

BSEC Granted “Participative Status” in the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

PERMIS was very happy to report on 10 June 2021 that the BSEC has been granted “*Participative Status*” with the Council of Europe’s (CoE) Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (EPA). The CoE’s Cultural Routes are a series of theme-based journeys through the countries of Europe and beyond that demonstrate a shared and vibrant historical and cultural heritage.

The granting of “*Participative Status*” means that the Governing Board of the EPA will now be inviting BSEC to its meetings on an ad hoc basis and to its events such as the *Annual Advisory Forum* and the *Training Academy*.

In his appearance before the *EPA Governing Board* at the end of April to pitch for inclusion, BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Michael B. Christides said that “*Participative Status*” would allow BSEC “to fully capitalize on the potential for enhancing cultural tourism in and among our Member States with the expert support and involvement of the EPA.”



Now that “*Participative Status*” had been conferred, he said it would give the BSEC Organization a big boost in promoting “home grown” Cultural Routes such as the “*Cultural Route of Byzantium*”, “*Ottoman Heritage - Hamam Routes*” or a “*Black Sea Coastal Cuisine Cultural Route*” through the region. He hoped that “*Participative Status*” would also attract more BSEC Member States to actively participate in existing Council of Europe’s Cultural Routes such as the “*European Cultural Route of Saints Cyril and Methodius*” and the “*European Routes of Historic Gardens*” among many others.

“BSEC PERMIS will continue to engage vigorously in activities and projects of common interest with the EPA and will do its utmost to establish more Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in the Black Sea region” said Ambassador Christides.

Moldova Tourism Forum 2021

Invited by the Moldovan Investment Agency, the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. Christides, took part in the “*Moldova Tourism Forum 2021*” on 27 May 2021. The two-day agenda of this hybrid event included discussions, case studies and workshops related to global trends and best practices, regional initiatives and success stories. Numerous prominent panelists shared their vision, experience and their latest tools to relaunch tourism towards a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient model.

To reflect political support and send out a strong message to the Moldovan tourism industry, participants to the event were welcomed by Acting Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova Aureliu Ciocoi and by the State Secretary of the Ministry of Economy and Infrastructure, Mihail Lupașcu. Both pointed out that, despite the difficulties encountered, the tourism sector in the Republic of Moldova demonstrates that there is plenty of scope for shaping a new reality, developing adaptability and embracing an innovative spirit.

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General outlined the activities and accomplishments of BSEC in the area of tourism during the challenging pandemic period including “lessons learned”. He emphasized the urgent need for greater cooperation and coordination among countries, especially as travel and tourism are among the biggest economic casualties of COVID-19.

The Forum offered an excellent collaboration platform for governmental agencies, industry stakeholders and academia to lay the foundation for more sustainable and safe tourism models.





The Global Tourism Forum (GTF), “*Innovation & Investment in Tourism Economy Summit*” was held in Bodrum on 11-12 June 2021.

The Forum organized by the World Tourism Forum Institute was devoted to the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic resulting in a loss of almost \$4.5 trillion to the industry.

Invited by the organizers, the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Michael B. Christides participated in the Panel on “*Black Sea - D-8 and Tourism*”. He described to the audience the measures that the BSEC Organization has taken during the pandemic to

help the tourism sector recover. “We are continuously working on the “*BSEC Covid Protocols*”, which are a set of safety, health and security measures, which can be endorsed and accepted by all of our Member States to recover tourist flows between them”. He said that BSEC had also created a new webpage where Member States could upload all the necessary information concerning possible visits between the 13 countries. There was also a plan, he said, to stage a “contest” among ‘start-ups’ in each country “to find new and innovative solutions for the current problems in tourism we are obliged to address today”.

Ambassador Christides said that “coordinating and cooperating” is the key for the recovery of tourism. He warned of the dangers of “too much competition” in tourism between countries and hoped that Covid-19 would magically make the element of competition disappear and that states would cooperate more.

TRANSPORT



37th BSEC-URTA General Assembly

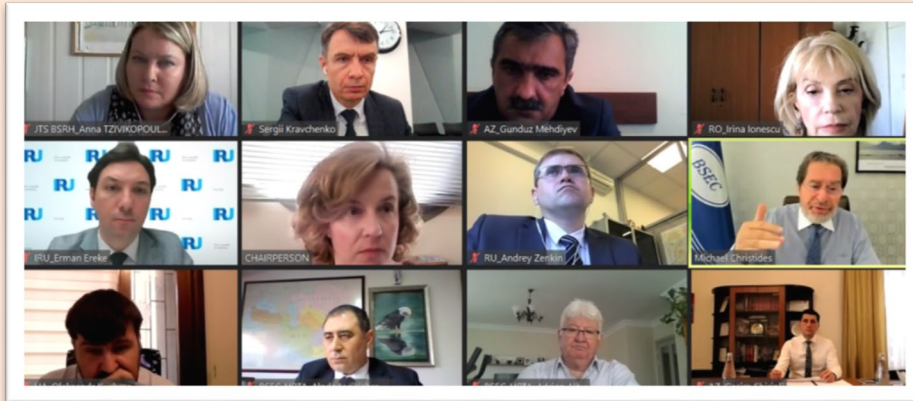
BSEC PERMIS Deputy Secretary General, Ambassador Traian Chebeleu, attended the “37th Meeting of the BSEC-URTA (Union of Road Transport Associations in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Region) General Assembly”, held in Istanbul, in a hybrid format, on 2 April 2021. The General Assembly evaluated the activities of the BSEC-URTA since its last meeting and discussed the current state of the international road transport industry in the BSEC Region along with the level of regional cooperation.



Conference on “Opportunities and obstacles: International road transport in the framework of TRACECA

On 18 May 2021 Ambassador Michael B. Christides and Ambassador Traian Chebeleu participated in the online Conference on “Opportunities and obstacles: International road transport in the framework of TRACECA (Transport Corridor Europe, Caucasus, Asia)”. In his intervention the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General highlighted the common concerns of BSEC and TRACECA and emphasised the need to strengthen regional cooperation and coordination to enhance the smooth passage of goods through the Member States of the two organizations.

BSRH Steering Committee



At its 12th Meeting, held online on 18 May 2021, the “*Steering Committee on the Development of the Black Sea Ring Highway (BSRH)*” considered the route of the highway in light of the ‘filled-in questionnaires’ provided by the Member States. They also exchanged views on actions needed to enhance and step up practical cooperation on the BSRH’s development.

XIth International Seminar on Trade and Transport Facilitation

BSEC PERMIS, represented by Ambassador Traian Chebeleu, Deputy Secretary General, took part in the “*XIth International Seminar on Trade and Transport Facilitation on Digital transformation of multimodal transport using the UN/CEFACT reference data model*”, held in Odessa, in a hybrid format, on 26-28 May 2021. The Seminar focused on multimodal data exchange, connectivity, trade and transport facilitation, particularly in the digitalization of the Black Sea - Baltic Sea and the Republic of Moldova – Ukraine – Georgia - Azerbaijan and TRACECA corridors.

The 2021 ITF Annual Summit of Transport Innovation for Sustainable Development

Invited by the Presidency of Ireland at the International Transport Forum (ITF), the BSEC PERMIS participated in the “2021 ITF Annual Summit on Transport Innovation for Sustainable Development: Reshaping Mobility in the Wake of Covid-19”, held on 17-28 May 2021 in a virtual format. Around 1800 delegates from 85 countries, including 43 ministers and deputy ministers responsible for transport from ITF member countries, and 24 heads of international organizations, attended this leading global platform engaging decision-makers from industry, civil society, media and academia to discuss the future of transport and mobility.

In his speech to the Open Ministerial Session, the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. Christides, underlined that the improvement of regional connectivity is one of the most important issues for the BSEC Organization, which highly values its increasingly dynamic collaboration with the ITF.

As in 2018 and 2019, the BSEC PERMIS had its own Stand, to present to the broader international public information on the Organization’s history, its activities in the area of transport, the major BSEC transport projects, their state of implementation, as well as present-day and future plans concerning transport and trade facilitation in the region.

On 19 May the BSEC Stand was visited in virtual mode by the ITF Secretary-General, Mr. Young Tae Kim, who discussed online with Ambassador Michael B. Christides the opportunities for further strengthening cooperation between the two Organizations in the vital sector of transport.



Latest updates in BSEC areas of cooperation: Working Groups

Much of BSEC PERMIS's important work in fostering cooperation among Member States takes place in the Working Groups which represent a wide range of economic, social, environmental, cultural and educational activity. Between April and June 2021, a series of Working Group meetings were held, namely: *Working Group on Education* (14 April); *Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on BSEC-EU Interaction* (15 April); *Cooperation in Science and Technology* (21 April); *Experts in Seismic Risk* (9 June); *Cooperation in Emergency Assistance* (10 June); *Banking and Finance* (16 June); *Trade and Economic Development/Customs Matters* (17 June).

OTHER NEWS



Union for the Mediterranean
Union pour la Méditerranée
الاتحاد من أجل المتوسط

High-Level Conference for the Launch of the 1st Progress Report on Euro-Mediterranean Regional Integration

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. Christides, was invited to participate in the “*High-Level Conference for the Launch of the 1st Progress Report on Euro-Mediterranean Regional Integration*”, hosted online by the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) on 27 May 2021.

In his welcoming-speech, Mr. Nasser Kamel, UfM Secretary General, underlined that the outcome of the 1st Progress Report shows that although regional integration has advanced in the UfM region, progress has been slow and remains below its potential level. The Report highlighted two important challenges that still remain: inadequate infrastructure for transport and energy connectivity and a lack of a common vision on human mobility as a driver of innovation and growth in the region.

The event brought together representatives of different regional organizations, free trade areas, as well as intergovernmental political and economic unions to share their respective experiences in promoting regional integration and to showcase some best practices which can be replicated in divergent sea basins.

Ambassador Christides took part in the panel “*How to unlock the full potential for greater regional economic integration?*” In an honest appraisal, he said that “perhaps one of the biggest obstacles for being more efficient and effective in establishing greater regional integration is the fact that, inspired by initial enthusiasm, regional organizations usually establish too many “subsidiary bodies” with a huge number of meetings. This plethora of events understandably diminishes their concrete, tangible results, driving the organizations into an unavoidable vicious circle: less tangible results, declining interest from Member States, diminishing participation and, thus, less effectiveness of the organizations. We need to transform this cycle into a virtuous one”, he declared.

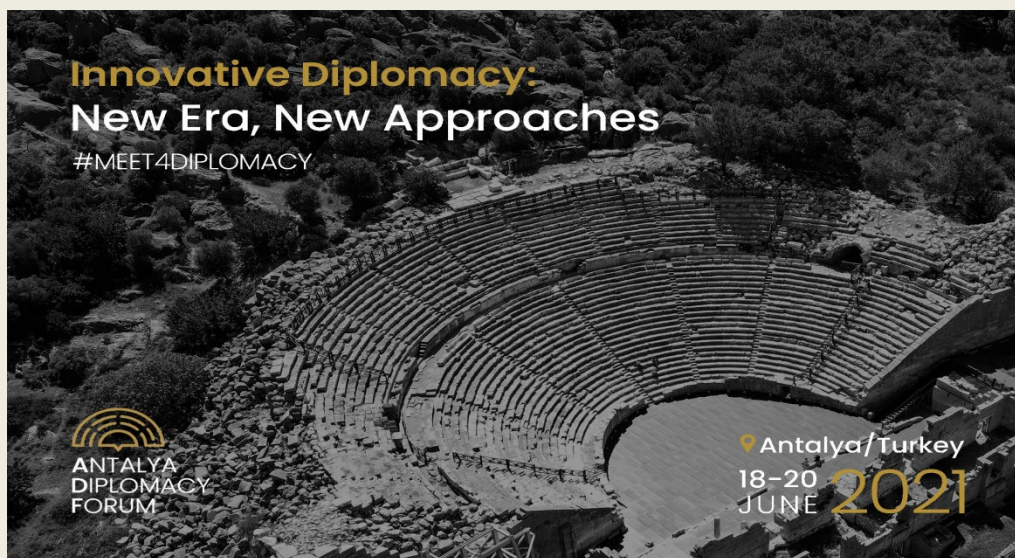
Antalya Diplomacy Forum

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Michael B. Christides participated at the “Antalya Diplomacy Forum”, hosted by the Turkish Foreign Minister, H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu on 18-20 June 2021 in Antalya. The Forum was attended by 11 Heads of States and Governments, 41 Ministers, and 60 representatives of international organizations and institutions.

Ambassador Christides participated as a speaker on the panel entitled “How Can We Increase the Effectiveness of Regional Organizations”. In his intervention he gave a series of frank answers to the question posed based on his experience of six years at the helm of BSEC. He said that “in order to have a successful international organization you have to have the political will and commitment of the Member States”. There had to be a greater sense of “ownership” towards the organization and “greater trust in it” and less “double talk and standards”. In terms of what he called the “human factor” it was important to have well-staffed, qualified, competent and experienced Secretariat involved. Dialogue had to be sincere with focused objectives not merely talk. He said that innovation was essential, and organizations had to be able to adapt to changing times and requirements otherwise decision making becomes cumbersome.

He told the high-profile Forum that since its establishment 29 years ago BSEC had served “as a precious forum for dialogue and understanding”. It was a very valuable vehicle for the implementation of concrete projects and “it has served as a very, very valuable first level mechanism of confidence building” which was vital in a region like the Black Sea. “If the Black Sea Economic Cooperation did not exist we should have had to invent it”, he said.

He concluded by saying: “Regional Organization is a must today. Covid has shown that we cannot manage alone. The global issues of today cannot be solved alone by one country because the huge global problems do not recognize borders”.





57th PABSEC General Assembly

The “57th Plenary Session of the PABSEC General Assembly” was held online on 22 June 2021. The Plenary Session was opened by Ms. Zinaida Greceanii, PABSEC President and President of the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. Ms. Olta Xhacker, BSEC Chairman-in-Office, Minister of European and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, addressed the Assembly by video message.

The Session adopted the decision on the fully-fledged membership of PABSEC of the Parliament of the Republic of Northern Macedonia which will officially start 1 January 2022. Mr. Goran Misovski, Vice-President of the Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia, offered thanks to the Assembly on behalf of his Government.

Ambassador Michael B. Christides, BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, also spoke to the meeting and informed them on the recent activities of the BSEC. He also bid farewell as this was the last PABSEC General Assembly that he would attend as Secretary General.

The Assembly adopted three Reports of the three PABSEC Committees on “The Role of Parliaments in preventing human trafficking” and three relevant Recommendations: No. 179/2021 - on economic aspects, No. 180/2021 - on legal and political aspect and No. 181/2021 - on social aspects.

The PABSEC Presidency was transferred from the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova to the Parliament of the Republic of Romania and it was decided that the “58th Plenary Session of the PABSEC General Assembly” will be held in Romania in November 2021.



Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Central European Initiative

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. Christides participated in the “*Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Central European Initiative (CEI)*” held online on 23 June 2021.

In his statement the Secretary General noted that: “During recent years the BSEC Organization and the CEI have combined their efforts on topics of common interest, among others, like combating marine litter and plastics in the sea, addressing the negative impact of Climate Change, promoting the *Blue Economy*.”

He recalled that in 2019 the BSEC PERMIS had organized an International High-level Conference entitled “*Inter- basin Cooperation on Marine Litter: a focus on the Danube River and the Black Sea*” in Sofia, Bulgaria. “The Conference was co-funded by the CEI, under its Cooperation Fund, and was very successful, leading to other, spin-off events which we are implementing today in the Black Sea region”.

The Secretary General continued: “BSEC PERMIS also participated in the recent initiative of the CEI entitled “SDGs Decade of Action – Exchange of experiences, best practices and current challenges in SDGs implementation, role of regional cooperation and partnerships”.

Ambassador Christides concluded by “confirming once again that the BSEC Organization and its Member States are looking forward to further expand coordination and synergies, in order to jointly address the serious challenges that our respective regions face today”.

The logo for MUSIAD, featuring the word "MUSIAD" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The letters "M", "S", and "I" are stylized with yellow and white geometric shapes. The logo is set against a dark blue rectangular background.

MÜSiAD Diplomacy and Gourmet Meeting

The Secretary General of BSEC PERMIS, Ambassador Michael B. Christides, participated in the “*Diplomacy and Gourmet Meeting with the BSEC Countries*” organized on 22 June 2021 in Gebze, Turkey by the Association of Independent Industrialists and Businessmen (MÜSiAD) of Turkey with the support of the BSEC PERMIS and attendance of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey H.E. Ambassador Faruk Kaymakçı. The Deputy Secretary General, Ambassador Traian Chebeleu, and the responsible Executive Manager, Mr. Alexei Nistrean, also attended the event with the representatives of the Consular missions of the Member States accredited to Turkey.

The meeting was focused on trade and economic cooperation with the aim to stimulate regional trade and improve relations between and among the BSEC Member States.

In his statement the Secretary General of BSEC PERMIS highlighted the activities and priorities of the BSEC Organization, which promotes economic cooperation among its Member States, stressed the importance of encouraging the direct contacts between the business people of the region and underlined the necessity for the BSEC Business Council to find its role in relation to MUSIAD in particular and in relation to the business circles of the region in general.

Participants also visited the Gebze Technical University, the Bilim Vadisi (IT Valley) and the Gebze Organized Industrial Zone.

Dear Readers,

We hope you enjoyed this Newsletter. There will be more details of BSEC's activities in the next issue.



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