

# News from the Black Sea

## Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation

Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS)



PERMANENT INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT (PERMIS)



### **Message of Secretary General, Ambassador Lazar Comanescu**

Dear Readers,

I feel particularly honoured to address you through this 17<sup>th</sup> issue of the “News from the Black Sea” as the newly appointed Secretary General of the Permanent International Secretariat of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC PERMIS).

I took over the helm of the BSEC PERMIS on 1 July 2021 from my predecessor Ambassador Michael B. Christides, who did a remarkable job during his six year tenure. I therefore seize the opportunity, to express once again my gratitude to Ambassador Christides and wish him success in his future endeavours.



As the Secretary General of an Organization promoting peace, stability and prosperity in an area of high geostrategic importance, serving as a significant forum for cooperation in a wide range of domains to the benefit of its 13 Member States, I will concentrate my efforts on further contributing to the development and strengthening of this Organization and the economic cooperation in the Black Sea area. I will seek during my tenure to deliver an ever-more assertive, dynamic, efficient and project oriented BSEC.

Dear Readers, as has been the practice for the past years, we will continue to regularly share with you through the “News from the Black Sea” the recent activities and accomplishments of the BSEC Organization.

We would value and welcome any comments or views you might have to make our Newsletter more reader friendly. Please also note that you can obtain further information on our website: <http://www.bsec-organization.org> and follow our Facebook account: <https://www.facebook.com/BSECPERMIS> .

*Sincere regards,  
Ambassador Lazar Comanescu*

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- ***Annual Advisory Forum of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe***
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- ***“BRIDGE – BS” kicks off to develop a sus-tainable Blue Economy***
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## Official Start of the Georgian Chairmanship in Office



**GEORGIAN CHAIRMANSHIP**  
THE BLACK SEA - WAVES OF INNOVATION  
1 JULY - 31 DECEMBER 2021

The Georgian BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office officially got underway for a period of six months (1 July to 31 December 2021) with the Coordination Meeting of the BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office, Committee of Senior Officials, Related Bodies and PERMIS held online on 12 July 2021.

The “Priorities” of the Georgian Chairmanship were presented at the meeting under the motto "The Black Sea - Waves of Innovation". The Chairmanship underlined that they would focus on achievable, practical and visible priorities contributing to the sustainable development of the wider Black Sea region as well as post-Covid economy building and result oriented regional cooperation. The tourism industry, innovative resources and technologies and renewable sources of energy were highlighted as the three main thematic areas. They added that they would also seek to further strengthen BSEC-EU cooperation.

The Coordination Meeting marked the first official event attended by the newly appointed BSEC Secretary General, Ambassador Lazar Comanescu. He warmly congratulated the Georgian Chairmanship and pledged the full support of the Secretariat to help deliver their priorities.

In his introductory remarks, Ambassador Comanescu said how honoured he was to have the trust and confidence bestowed upon him by the BSEC Member States and he underlined that his guiding principle throughout his tenure as Secretary General would be to deliver an ever-more assertive, dynamic, efficient and project oriented BSEC.

For the Priorities of the Georgian Chairmanship in Office:

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

## **COURTESY VISITS**

### **The BSEC PERMIS recently appointed Secretary General pays and receives courtesy visits**

Following his appointment as the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Lazar Comanescu paid his first visit to Ankara, capital of the Host Country, to meet with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey H.E. Mevlüt Çavuşođlu on 3 September 2021. During his trip to Ankara the Secretary General also met with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Director for EU Affairs Ambassador Faruk Kaymakçı, and the Director General for Multilateral Economic Affairs Ambassador Esen Altuđ. The Secretary General was accompanied by the First Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Ebru Barutçu Gökdenizler during his contacts at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The meeting provided a first hand opportunity for the Secretary General to convey his appreciation for the valuable support rendered by Turkey to his candidature. It also served for a fruitful exchange of views on some of the issues of priority in the future activities of the BSEC and in rendering the Organization ever more relevant and effective in the present international framework. The upcoming 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the BSEC to be commemorated in 2022 was also discussed in this connection. Minister Çavuşođlu reiterated Turkey's strong support to the BSEC objectives and activities and reassured the Secretary General of Turkey's full support in carrying out his mandate to further the aims and interests of the Organization.



*Visit to H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşođlu, Turkish Foreign Minister.*

### Other Courtesy visits

Ambassador Comanescu also paid curtesy visits to a number of local authorities.



*Visit to Mr. Ali Yerlikaya, Governor of Istanbul, 15 September 2021.*



*Visit to Mr. Ekrem İmamoğlu, Mayor of Istanbul, 15 September 2021.*



*Visit to Mr. Şükrü Genç, Mayor of Sarıyer Municipality, where the BSEC Headquarters are located, 6 September 2021.*

Ambassador Lazar Comanescu also received several visitors during the period covered by this edition, wishing him a successful tenure and expressing support and cooperation in fulfilling his mandate to further the objectives of the BSEC.



*Working lunch with Mr. Umberto de Pretto, Secretary General of the International Road Transport Union (IRU) and Mr. Adrian Albu, BSEC-URTA Secretary General, 5 July 2021.*

*Visit by Dr. Akkan Suver, President of the Marmara Group Strategic and Social Research Foundation, 7 July 2021.*



*Visit by Mr. Sahak Sargsyan, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Armenia to BSEC, 2 September 2021.*



*Visit by the Head of the Turkey Office of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS) Mr. Walter Glos and Mrs. Arzu Yüzgeç, Project Coordinator, 7 July 2021.*





*Visit by Mr. Andrey Buravov, Consul General of the Russian Federation in Istanbul, 7 September 2021.*

*Visit by Mr. Ehud Eitam, Acting Consul General of the State of Israel in Istanbul, 9 September 2021.*



*Visit by Mr. Scott M. Oudkirk, Deputy Head of the Mission of the US Embassy in Ankara and Ms. Daria Darnell, Consul General of the United States of America in Istanbul, 17 September 2021.*

*Visit by Ms. Narmina Mustafayeva, Consul General of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Istanbul, 24 September 2021.*



## **EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE**

### **Signs of Climate Change at its worst! A number of BSEC Member States battled devastating wildfires and floods!**



The summer of 2021 was unfortunately characterized by devastating massive forest fires, floods and muddy torrents across the BSEC region. The Republic of Albania, the Hellenic Republic, the Republic of North Macedonia, the Russian Federation, and the Republic of Turkey were Member States that were severely affected by these calamities.

The heat waves as well as heavy rainfalls, both mostly generated by climate change and human factors, ravaged hundreds of thousands of hectares of forests and urban areas forcing widespread evacuations and causing great physical damage and tragic human, wildlife and cattle loss.

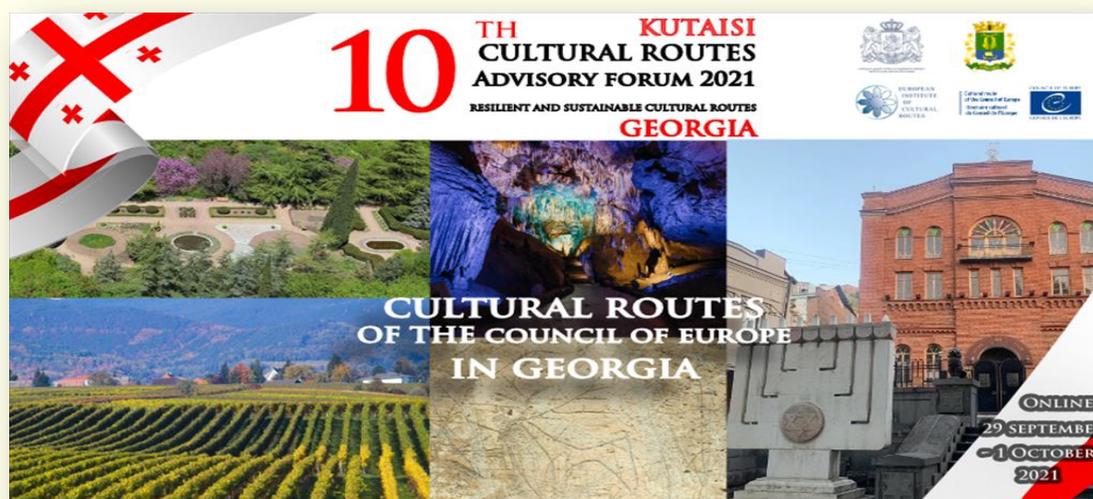
These environmental disasters demonstrated once again, how urgently joint measures need to be taken to protect and preserve our most precious asset: our natural ecosystem. They have also once again highlighted the need to intensify concerted efforts by Member States within the framework of the BSEC respective subsidiary bodies in establishing and implementing concrete mechanisms for

immediate action aimed at effective regional cooperation and coordination in emergency situations. This is all the more relevant in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the frequent cases of natural disasters which, during the last years, have hit an ever growing number of the BSEC Member States. In this regard, the existing “Agreement among the Governments of the Participating States of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) on Collaboration in Emergency Assistance and Emergency Response to natural and man-made Disasters” and its Additional Protocol, provides a strong legal basis for regional cooperation in the important area of emergency assistance.

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu, in his letters addressed to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the affected countries, expressed deepest condolences, solidarity and sympathy to the respective Governments and wished a speedy recovery to all those whose lives have been shattered by these disasters.



## CULTURE



Upon the invitation by the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA), the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Youth of Georgia and the Kutaisi City Municipality, the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Lazar Comanescu, participated in the Annual Advisory Forum of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, which focused on “Resilient and Sustainable Cultural Routes – Innovating Out of Crisis”.

Addressing the Forum, Ambassador Comanescu emphasized on the cultural and ethnical diversity of the Black Sea region, its rich historical and architectural heritage as well its diverse natural resources, beautiful and dramatic landscape and said that BSEC PERMIS is open to collaborate closely with the EPA and other interested partners in order to fully capitalize on the potential for enhancing cultural tourism in and among its Member States.

On June 2021, the EPA granted the BSEC Organization “Participative Status”, as a further recognition of the role and performance of the BSEC in the field of cultural heritage and in promoting intercultural dialogue and better understanding in the Black Sea region and beyond.

## **BLUE ECONOMY**

### **The Black Sea Virtual Knowledge Centre (BSVKC) (www.bsec-bsvkc.org) celebrates its first year!**

Launched in 2020 the BSVKC is a project supported by the European Commission and managed by BSEC PERMIS. It seeks to become a centralized platform and source for information on the Blue Economy in the Black Sea. It also aims to serve towards improving synergies between stakeholders and Blue Economy related projects in the region. The BSVKC is becoming a virtual meeting point for Blue Economy and is



contributing to the implementation of the Common Maritime Agenda.

We would like to also welcome you on-board towards a virtual Blue Economy Community by registering in the platform.

### **Mix and Match Networking Event : DIGICIRC project (H2020)**



BSEC PERMIS's Black Sea Virtual Knowledge Centre (BSVKC), in cooperation with the DIGICIRC Project (H2020) and the Black Sea Assistance Mechanism (BSAM) co-organized a webinar on 8 July 2021, addressed to SMEs and Start-ups to help them develop innovative digital technologies and access digital tools, training and grants in support of the region's Blue Economy. The event was attended by 120 participants from the region and beyond.

DIGICIRC is a European Union funded project currently involving 9 countries with 11 partner organizations led by Cap Digital. It aims at boosting the circular economy by leveraging digital tools. For more information: <https://digicirc.eu/blue-economy>



### **"BRIDGE – BS" kicks off to develop a sustainable Blue Economy**

The kick-off event for the "BRIDGE-BS: Advancing Black Sea Research and Innovation to Co-Develop Blue Growth within Resilient Ecosystems" project, under Horizon 2020, took place online on 12-13 July 2021.

The project will focus on ecosystem resilience, services, and development of the Blue Economy in the Black Sea. Using the EU funded H2020 CSA Black Sea Connect, BRIDGE BS will map, monitor, and model ecosystem services and their responses to environmental pressures in order to identify the safe operating space within which a sustainable, climate-neutral, Blue Economy can develop. The BSEC PERMIS will be a key partner in this project.

The project will run for 54 months and will involve 32 partners from the BSEC Member States, European Union and regional organizations and institutions. For more information: <http://connect2blacksea.org/press-release-bridge-bs-kick-off/>

### **Enhancing the Establishment of Sustainable Blue Economy**

Within the framework of the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) aiming for a sustainable blue economy across the Black Sea, and as part of the Black Sea Assistance Mechanism (BSAM), Ms. Sophia Zherebchuk and Mr. Dmytro Cheberkus, representatives of the Ukrainian National Hub (NH), made a presentation on the implementation of CMA in Ukraine. Both longstanding experts in national and regional policymaking, they provided information on the challenges and opportunities for a sustainable blue economy in Ukraine.

Considering the importance of regional collaboration and the future perspectives of the CMA, the establishment of the national interagency working group for an effective implementation of the CMA at national level was initiated. The working group will be the main platform for discussions and decisions for involved Ministries, NGOs, private sector, academia etc., thus enhancing the dialogue between national and regional actors for further collaborations towards the CMA implementation, fostering the adoption of a national blue economy strategy.

Regional partners interested in developing any joint initiatives with Ukrainian blue economy stakeholders are encouraged to contact the Ukrainian NH through the official email - [ukraine-nh@blackseablueeconomy.eu](mailto:ukraine-nh@blackseablueeconomy.eu).

To follow all blue economy activities in the region: <https://blackseablueeconomy.eu/>  
<http://www.bsec-bsvkc.org>

## **Youth will save our seas!**



PERMIS received more than 60 essays by high-school students from 13 BSEC Member States for the first phase of the Regional Essay Competition: “Saving our Sea: new ways to reduce marine pollution in the Black Sea”.

The Regional Essay Competition aimed at raising awareness and motivating young people in the BSEC Member States to take action against the growing marine pollution challenge in the Black Sea, is part of the Project “Pilot innovative solutions for fighting marine litter in the Black Sea”.

The prize winners will be announced on 1 November and the essay of the first place prize winner will be published in our next Newsletter.

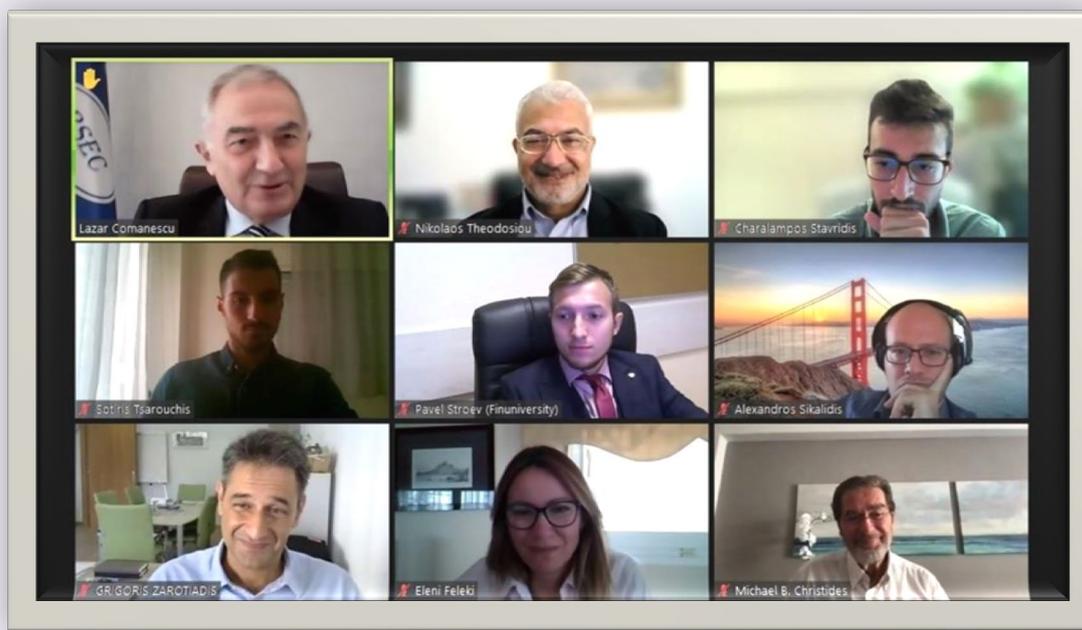
## OTHER NEWS



The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu, invited by the Marmara Group Foundation participated in the “24th Eurasian Economic Summit - A philosophy of nearly a quarter-century” held online on 8-9 July 2021, and made an intervention under the first session entitled “Humanity Deserves Better –The New World after the Coronavirus”.

In his intervention at the meeting attended by past and present high officials, top-level decision-makers and leading experts, Ambassador Comanescu informed the participants on the activities of BSEC as well as on how the COVID-19 pandemic has confronted governments, the business community and civil society in the BSEC Region with serious challenges. He underlined that the appropriate response to these challenges was through increased interaction and constructive dialogue and provided information on numerous online events and initiatives during this period, including High Level Conferences, where the BSEC Member States addressed the ways and means to intensify regional cooperation for the implementation of the SDGs and for meeting the new challenges created by the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Thessaloniki Sustainability Summit



Invited by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu took part in the “Thessaloniki Sustainability Summit” held online on 15 September 2021.

The Secretary General delivered the welcome address at the opening of the event, in which he outlined the activities and accomplishments of BSEC towards achieving the SDGs in the BSEC region and emphasized the importance of the successful implementation of the “Feasibility Study for a Black Sea SDGs Observatory” project by the joint team from AUTH and Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation (FinU) with the grant allocated from the Black Sea Project Promotion Facility (BSPPF).

The Secretary General expressed his hope that the deliverables of the project, once the latter is completed, will help to boost cooperation in the Black Sea region and pave the way for achieving further tangible results in the implementation of the SDGs.

During the period covered by this Newsletter the BSEC PERMIS also held a number of Working Group meetings covering such areas as Tourism, Budgetary and Financial Issues, Organizational and Legal Matters.

**For more events during the Georgian Chairmanship-in-Office of BSEC please visit:**  
<http://www.bsec-organization.org/events/page-1>



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