

News from the Black Sea

Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation

Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS)



PERMANENT INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT (PERMIS)



Dear Readers,

We have the pleasure to share with you in this 26th issue of our “Newsletter”, information on the BSEC activities carried out in the first three months of this year.

From 1 January to 30 June 2024, the BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office (CiO) is being carried out by Albania, under a most auspicious motto **“Coming Together for a Peaceful Cooperation in the BSEC Area”**. Auspicious indeed as we need to urgently tackle the serious challenges to peace our region continues to face.

The priorities as well as the calendar of events of the Albanian CiO were presented at the Coordination Meeting which took place online on 31 January 2024. You may find more details there upon in the section dedicated to this event.

Dear Readers,

The first three months have been quite busy for BSEC and our Newsletter provides you with a snapshot of the most relevant activities carried out there-in.

A special mention in this context is the attention paid to the commemoration on 4 February of the **“International Day of Human Fraternity”**, to the celebration of, **“International Women’s Day”** (8 March), and to the commemoration on 21 March of the **“International Day of Forests”**.

While hoping you enjoy the Newsletter, stay tuned with us via BSEC website and social media accounts.

Ambassador Lazar Comanescu
Secretary General

HEADLINES

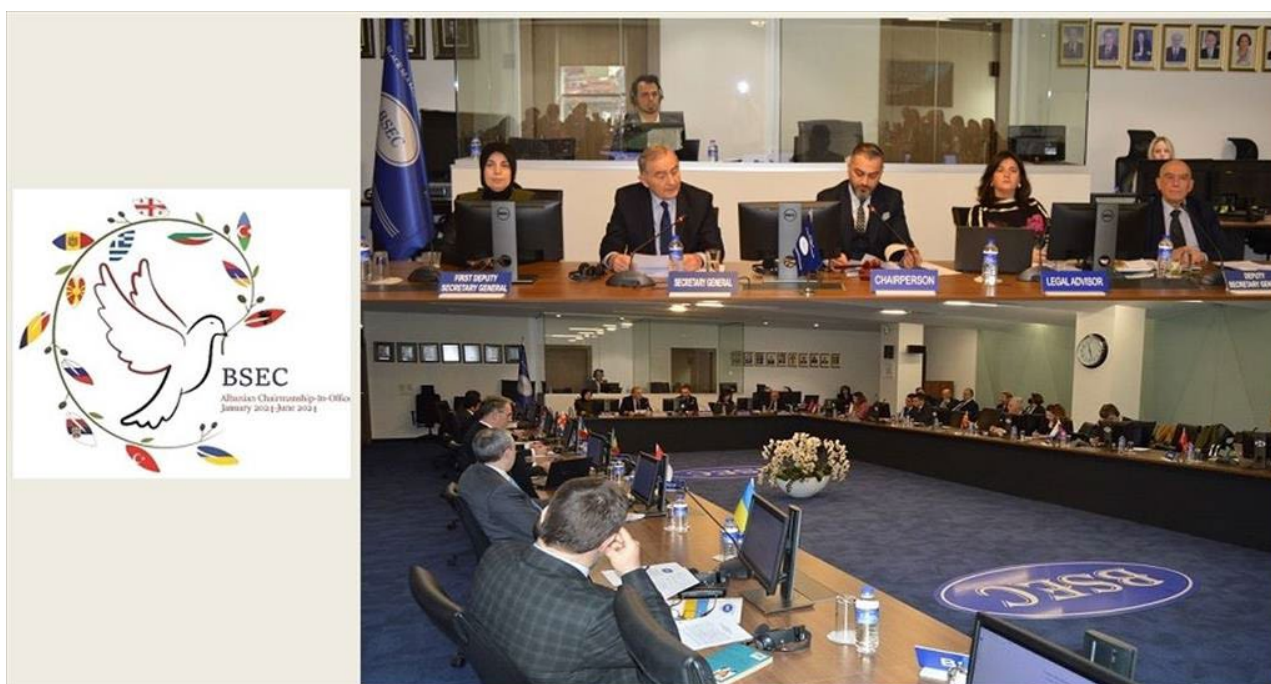
- **In the spotlight**
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IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Coordination Meeting of the Albanian BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office (CiO) with the BSEC Committee of Senior Officials, the BSEC Related Bodies and the BSEC PERMIS, chaired by H.E. Mr. Besart Kadia, Deputy Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania, took place in the BSEC Headquarters on 31 January 2024.

Deputy Minister Besart Kadia presented the Priorities of the Albanian BSEC CiO (1 January – 30 June 2024), in line with the Chairmanship's motto "Coming together for a peaceful cooperation in the BSEC area" and with a view to promote cooperation among member states for finding joint solutions on difficult issues.

For the text of the Priorities please visit: <https://www.bsec-organization.org/chairmanship>



WORKING VISITS

On the occasion of his visit to Bucharest on 13-16 February 2024, BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu, met H.E. Ms. Luminita Odobescu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania, whom he briefed on the latest developments in the BSEC Organization.

He highlighted the importance of the adoption by the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (CMFA) in December 2023 of the revised BSEC Economic Agenda and of the reactivation of the Project Development Fund (PDF) as well as the enhancement of the project-oriented dimension of BSEC.

Minister Odobescu highly appreciated BSEC's efforts aimed at overcoming the challenges the

region is currently facing and reaffirmed Romania's commitment to continue to actively support BSEC's activity, including through due consideration to the reinvigoration of the PDF.



BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu paid a working visit to Tirana on 6 March 2024, to meet H.E. Mr. Igli Hasani, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania and current BSEC Chairman-in-Office.

The two gentlemen exchanged views on the current developments in the Black Sea region and within BSEC, with particular focus on the program of work, objectives and activities of the Organization under the Albanian Chairmanship-in-Office. Both sides reiterated their commitment to work closely towards the implementation of those objectives.





*Working visit by Mr. Konstantinos Koutras,
Consul General of Greece.
(BSEC Headquarters, 24 January 2024)*



*Working visit by Ms. Steliana Nedera, Manager of the
UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub
(BSEC Headquarters, 6 February 2024)*



*Working visit by Mr. Nairi Petrossian, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Armenia to BSEC
(BSEC Headquarters, 12 February 2024).*

BSEC WORKING GROUPS/STEERING COMMITTEES

During the period covered by this Newsletter, the BSEC PERMIS also held a number of Working Group meetings covering such areas of cooperation as Culture, Environmental Protection, Emergency Assistance/Seismic Risk, Exchange of Statistical Data and Economic Information, Transport, and the BSEC Project Development Fund.

KEY EVENTS

Meeting of the Presidents of the Academies of Sciences

The First “Meeting of the Presidents of the Academies of Sciences of the BSEC Member States”, was held in Istanbul on 14 February 2024, organized upon the initiative of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC).

BSEC PERMIS First Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Kavakcı participated in the Meeting and reiterated the indispensability of joining efforts at intra and inter-national academic communities within BSEC ecosystem. She also provided the participants with an updated information of the work of pertinent BSEC working groups.

The two-day program was designed to encourage participants to exchange ideas and benefit from one another both in formal and informal settings.



86th Session of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee

BSEC PERMIS Delegation headed by Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu, participated at the “86th Session of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee” (ITC), held in Geneva on 20-23 February 2024.

During his statement, Ambassador Comanescu highlighted the fact that the protection of the environment has been high on the agenda of the BSEC Organization, not least in the sector of transports which has a lot to do with the efforts aimed at finding climate and environmental solutions for the Sustainable Development. He reiterated in this context the need for coordinated efforts and political will of governments to adjust their transport policies in line with new demands and to increase the capacity of countries in dealing with the climate change challenges.

On the sidelines of the UNECE ITC, Ambassador Comanescu had a bilateral meeting with the UNECE Executive Secretary, Ms. Tatiana Molcean, with the aim to further explore possibilities for expanding and deepening cooperation.



27th Eurasian Economic Summit

BSEC PERMIS First Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dr. Merve Kavakcı and Executive Manager Mr. Kenan Murtuzov participated in the “27th Eurasian Economic Summit”, organized in Istanbul, on 21-22 February 2024, by the Marmara Group Strategic and Social Research Foundation under the title “From Crises to Stability, Building an Inclusive World”.

The two-day event brought together over 300 participants who discussed and elaborated solutions for pressing global issues.

The President of the Marmara Group Foundation Dr. Akkan Suver, called on the international community to enhance dialogue and cooperation to find solutions to the ongoing multiple crises in the world.

Ambassador Dr. Merve Kavakcı also addressed the Summit, informing the participants about the BSEC and its current activities, as well as on the role that BSEC Organization is called upon to play for fostering regional cooperation.



Antalya Diplomatic Forum (ADF)

The third edition of ADF took place in Antalya on 1-3 March 2024, under the auspices of H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of the Republic of Türkiye, and with the participation of current and former heads of state and government, ministers, heads of international organizations, diplomats, representatives of academia, think-tanks, students and youth organizations, media and civil society from more than 140 countries.

BSEC PERMIS was represented in the Forum by Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu whose agenda included participation as speaker in the panel “Black Sea: A Regional Ownership Version 2.0?”. First Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dr. Merve Kavakçı also attended the event.



Meeting of the BSEC-URTA Working Party on Digitalization

The “BSEC-URTA Working Party on Digitalization”, aimed at digitalizing road transport documents, was held online on 7 March 2024 with the participation of guests from BSEC PERMIS, Mr. Sergei Kravchenko, IRU, and TRACECA. More information is available on:

<https://bsec-urta.org/2024/03/08/digitalization-is-the-way-bsec-urta-working-party-on-digitalization/>

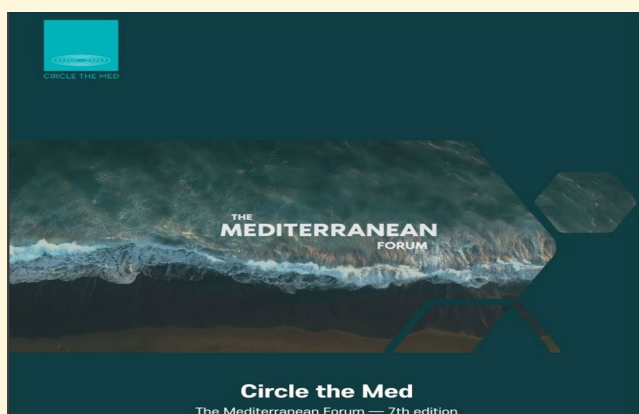
11th Baku Global Forum

The Global Forum took place in Baku, on 14-16 March 2024. The generic topic of the Forum was “Fixing the Fractured World” with debates organized in several thematic panels on issues related to security, global governance, regional perspectives and challenges, climate change etc.

As speaker in the panel dedicated to regional cooperation perspectives, respectively EU and its neighbors, BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu focused on the importance of regional economic cooperation and BSEC-EU interaction as a win-win process.



OTHER EVENTS



The “7th edition of the Circle the Med Forum”, expanded to include the wider Black Sea region, was held in Athens on 18-19 January 2024.

Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dimitrios Rallis represented BSEC PERMIS in the Forum and moderated the Dialogue Panel on “Key Challenges in the Mediterranean and Black Sea Regions”. The discussions held during the panel gave the opportunity to the participants and the audience to refer to the need for the international and regional organizations to increase their efforts to urgently promote environmental protection measures amidst the difficult political and security challenges especially connected with the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East.



BSEC PERMIS participated online in the “2024 ITF Annual Consultation with International Organizations”, hosted by OECD Conference

Centre and held in hybrid format on 31 January 2024, in preparation of the forthcoming 2024 ITF Summit on “Greening Transport: Keeping Focus in Times of Crisis (Leipzig, 22 - 24 May 2024) and the 2025 Summit on “Enhancing Transport Resilience to Global Shocks”.

The 2024 ITF Summit will focus on the transport sector's role in environmental sustainability, examining the impact of climate, health, and geopolitical crises, and their effects on transport systems.

Balkans and Black Sea Forum: “Trading Arteries and Global Supply Chains at stake”

BSEC PERMIS Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dimitrios Rallis participated in the 5th Edition of the Balkans and Black Sea Forum held in Piraeus, on 15 February 2024.

The Forum was dedicated to recent challenges related to trading arteries & global supply chains, with the aim to provide an opportunity to exchange views on the impact of the recent crises in the Middle East and Ukraine on global trade routes and arteries as well as on the economies of many countries in the respective regions.



Workshop on Tech Entrepreneurship

The Workshop on “Tech Entrepreneurship” was held online, on 22 February 2024. It was structured in two sessions, the first focusing on the policy environment for a resilient ecosystem, and the second on support mechanisms and scaling for sustainable growth.

During her intervention, BSEC PERMIS First Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dr. Merve Kavakcı referred to the importance of strong regional economic cooperation in promoting sustainable economic development in the BSEC region. All panelists emphasized the importance of empowering entrepreneurs and fostering innovation, supporting start-ups, and creating an environment conducive to technological advancement for sustainable economic development.



The kick-off event for the “TOURAL” Project, under Horizon Europe Program, took place in Thessaloniki, on 22-23 February 2024.

BSEC PERMIS was represented at the event by Executive Manager, Ms. Rositsa Stoeva, who made a presentation on PERMIS’s role in supporting TOURAL’s implementation.

The project focuses on cultural and creative tourism as drivers for sustainable development and covers three regions from the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region (Italy, Croatia, Greece) and three regions from the Black Sea area (Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine).

More information about the project can be founded at <https://toural-project.eu/>

Working visit to Bursa Technical University (BTU)

Upon the invitation extended by Bursa Technical University (BTU), BSEC PERMIS First Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dr. Merve Kavakcı paid a working visit to the Rector of the University Professor Naci Çağlar, on 28 February 2024 and held meetings with “Bursateknopark” and the “Central Research Laboratory” (MERLAB).

Among the issues raised in the meetings were the significance of sea transportation in global economic activities and the soaring importance of the BSEC region blue growth in creation of blue

economies. The two institutions agreed upon exploring ways through which BSEC and BTU can collaborate on projects of common ground.





BSEC PERMIS Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Dimitrios Rallis participated in the “Regional Forum” aimed at generating momentum for a regional push for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) acceleration, and presented the contribution of BSEC towards the implementation of the SDGs. He highlighted that their attainment has been inscribed high in the BSEC Economic Agenda, the Organization’s mid-term strategic document. He made specific reference to the efforts of BSEC PERMIS to promote cooperation, exchange of information and of best practices among the BSEC Member States. He also mentioned concrete BSEC projects and programs aiming at the implementation of SDGs.

Conference “The Role of Regional Cooperation Mechanisms in the Current Geopolitical Context”

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Lazar Comanescu, participated as keynote speaker in the Conference “The Role of Regional Cooperation Mechanisms in the Current Geopolitical Context” held in Bucharest, on 27 March 2024.

In his intervention, the Secretary General focused on the importance of the economic dimension of security and the contribution there to of regional economic cooperation.

He also highlighted the need of better correlation and synergies among the various regional organizations.



SAVE THE DATE

The First Meeting of the “Higher Education Institutions Specialized in Tourism Education within the BSEC Framework” will take place in Baku, on 22-23 April 2024. The event, which will be organized jointly with the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan, under their coordination of the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism, aims to deliberate on the multifaceted role of tourism education in driving innovation, sustainability, and economic growth in the tourism industries of BSEC Countries.

Along the above lines, the various thematic panel discussions will be formulated to provide a unique platform for the exchange of best practices, networking and collaboration opportunities for future synergies and partnerships development.



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