



**PRESS RELEASE ON
THE WORLD TOURISM FORUM LUCERNE 2019**
(Lucerne, 2-4 May 2019)

Invited by the organizers, the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES participated in the prestigious “*World Tourism Forum Lucerne 2019*”, which took place in Lucerne, Switzerland from 2-4 May 2019.

The event was centred around “*Human capital in an Age of Disruption: Talent, Innovation and Diversity*”: a great number of Government representatives, ambassadors, academics, business stakeholders and experts from around the world took part in the numerous main panels and other parallel sessions hosted in the *Lucerne Cultural Centre*.

Some of the main conclusions reached during the very interesting and thought-provoking sessions were that, although the digital transformation of the ever-more-important Tourism industry is inevitable and desirable, the main leading factor remains the human-being himself; mainly because Tourism has to do with the offer of “experiences” to the world tourism clientele and these experiences can only be promoted and offered from humans to humans.

One of the most interesting and significant moments was the interview of the “Surprise Guest” of the meeting, who turned out to be 16-year old Isabel WIJSEN from Bali, Indonesia who, together with her sister, have managed to promote, first on their native Bali island and later all over the world, the “*Bye Bye Plastic Bags*” (BBPG) social movement of young people; their main goal is to keep the beautiful coastlines of our countries free from plastics. Secretary General CHRISTIDES seized this opportunity to discuss with **Isabel WIJSEN**, the possibility to establish similar movements of young people in the littoral states of the Black Sea, members of the BSEC Organization through BBPG’s representative in Athens.

Apart from the above, Secretary General CHRISTIDES had the opportunity to exchange views on the possible closer cooperation of the PERMIS with the WTFL and other entities, in order to diversify and enrich its activities in the important Tourism sector. The possibility of cooperating in the establishment of the bi-annual Tourism Award for start-up businesses in BSEC Member States which develop the most interesting and valuable tourism soft- and hard-ware was also discussed.