



**PRESS RELEASE ON  
SEMINAR ON PROSPECTS FOR INCREASED CHINESE TOURISM TO  
THE BSEC REGION**

*(Istanbul, BSEC Headquarters, 14 May 2019)*

The “*Seminar on Prospects for Increased Chinese Tourism to the BSEC Region*” was held on 14 May 2019 at the BSEC Headquarters. The event, an initiative of the BSEC PERMIS, was organized with the generous financial assistance of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey and with the expert support of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO); it attracted the interest of almost 60 participants from the BSEC region, both from Ministries and National Authorities in charge of Tourism, as well as from tourism associations, airlines and private stakeholders interested in attracting Chinese visitors to the Region.

The Seminar was divided into four parts: during the ceremonial opening, the Secretary General of the BSEC PERMIS, Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES, Ambassador Georgi PANAYOTOV, Representative of the Bulgarian BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office, Mr. Zhu SHANZHONG, Executive Director of UNWTO and H.E. Prof. Ahmet Haluk DURSUN, Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, addressed the participants.

Following the opening, five keynote presentations were delivered by experts of the UNWTO, of related international institutions, Universities, interested airlines and private stakeholders with expertise in Chinese tourism. The ensuing panel brought together a selection of experts from a wide spectrum of backgrounds, including international organizations, trade associations, airlines and experts with experience of the Chinese tourism market, who exchanged related information and experience with a view to identifying both the opportunities and the challenges of attracting more Chinese tourism to the Black Sea region.

During the last panel, the representatives of the relevant authorities in charge of Tourism from four BSEC Member States (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Greece and Turkey), presented the examples of their respective policies and best practices in attracting Chinese tourists. The concluding remarks were formulated by Ambassador Selim YENEL, First Deputy Secretary General of BSEC PERMIS and Mr. Zhu SHANZHONG, Executive Director of UNWTO.

The goal of the Seminar was to explore ways and means to attract to the BSEC region more visitors from the biggest tourism market, i.e. from China, and serve as an important step in that direction; in that sense the Seminar was considered by all participants as helpful and undoubtedly a great success. The comprehensive and detailed presentations and exchange of information, views and practices helped participants to broaden their respective horizons and opened up new ideas and possibilities to work upon. As the number of outbound Chinese tourists is growing exponentially, it will be up to the relevant authorities in charge of Tourism, other interested agencies and airlines from BSEC Member States to step up their cooperation in order to attract a bigger share of Chinese tourists to the wider Black Sea region.