



**PRESS RELEASE**  
**ON UNECE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE (ITC)**  
*(Geneva, 25-27 February 2020)*

Invited by the organizers, the BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES, followed the 82<sup>nd</sup> Session of the UNECE *Inland Transport Committee (ITC)*, which was held in the Geneva UN premises on 25 – 27 February 2020.

The high-level policy segment of this year's Session was entitled "*Environmental challenges for sustainable inland transport*" and dealt with all the serious challenges that Nature's disruptive forces pose to human societies and with the measures that should be taken in order to diminish the environmental pollution provoked by inland transport participants today. It was concluded with the endorsement of the ITC Declaration "*Enhancing sustainable inland transport solutions to global climate and environmental challenges – A united call to action*".

Concerning climate change, the heavy carbon footprint of inland transports in the BSEC region and the need to adapt, the PERMIS Secretary General referred to the "*BSEC Climate Change Adaptation Strategy for the Black Sea*" and underlined that the overall implementation of the above strategy during the last years does not satisfy BSEC and that the PERMIS is looking forward to the support of the UNECE ITC, in order to amplify efforts and facilitate the accession of BSEC Member States to international legal instruments promoting the sustainability of inland transport solutions.

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General also followed an interesting panel on the "*Transport and connectivity potential of the Caspian Sea region: Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan – the shortest route*" during which latest initiatives offering to regional and global trade a fast and secure route through the Caspian area, which better connects the Black Sea region to that of Central Asia were presented.

Ambassador CHRISTIDES briefly underlined the importance of **regional** cooperation in order to achieve tangible improvements in what concerns connectivity and transport; and added that various States in the region approach the "*Belt & Road Initiative*" of China in a narrowly **national, competitive** way, as if it is a "*beauty contest*" among countries, and not in a **collective, regional** way, which only makes sense.

On the side-lines of the event the PERMIS Secretary General had the opportunity to meet bilaterally with a number of participants, heads of national delegations and dignitaries of various international entities.