



**PRESS RELEASE ON THE BSEC - ICBSS WEBINAR
(19 May 2020)**

The International Center for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS), together with BSEC organized on 19 May 2020 an online discussion about regional cooperation and coordination during the covid-19 outbreak and the role of international organizations in the challenging post - pandemic era, focusing on the Black Sea Region.

85 participants from all around the world joined this very first webinar moderated by Professor George Tzogopoulos. BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael Christides, made an opening statement prior to the session held in “question and answer” format.

Ambassador Christides emphasized the fact that the Coronavirus outbreak has dramatically exposed previously existing fractions and tensions around the Globe and it has certainly also put multilateral cooperation to a new, severe test. He said he believed that the COVID-19 crisis has shown the need for more cooperation and coordination not only between States, but within States, and that this crisis provided several lessons for how world leaders should approach other issues of global scale, such as climate change.

He further continued saying that according to some analysts, in the end international cooperation will come out stronger and with more solid structures to support it. This is also the hope in what concerns regional cooperation, and especially cooperation among the Member States of BSEC Organization.

During the discussion the speakers had the opportunity to also responded to many pertinent questions from participants, mainly on how regional Organizations like the BSEC could assume a greater role and contribute in promoting **collective** efforts for managing the severe impact of similar crises.

Most participants agreed that this first Webinar was very useful and that there should be follow-ups to it.