



**PRESS RELEASE**  
**ON THE FIRST VIDEO-MEETING AMONG HIGH-LEVEL DIGNITARIES FROM**  
**THE WORKING GROUP ON COOPERATION IN TOURISM**  
**OF BSEC MEMBER STATES**

*(11 June 2020)*

In light of the COVID-19 outbreak, the **BSEC Permanent International Secretariat** (PERMIS), in consultation with the **Romanian BSEC Chairmanship** and the **Republic of Turkey**, the coordinating country of the Working Group on Tourism, and with the expert support of the **United Nation World Tourism Organisation** (UNWTO), organized the first video-meeting among high-level dignitaries from the Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism of interested BSEC Member States, which was held on line on 11 June 2020.

During the first session of the event the discussion centred on COVID-19 and its dire impact on the Travel and Tourism industry of all Member States, as well as on the relevant measures adopted by them. During the second session participants focused on the requirements of the post-pandemic era of the “*New Normality*”, with the main objective to consider the possibilities of promoting among the interested BSEC Member States the joint elaboration of measures and actions, in order to facilitate the gradual return of Tourism flows between BSEC Member States.

The high-level dignitaries from the Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism from **Albania, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Hellenic Republic, Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine** underlined, among other, the significance of the BSEC PERMIS initiative and expressed their initial interest in considering the promotion of a new cooperation platform with the aim of agreeing on concrete joint parameters, which will enable the safe and gradual reopening of Tourism among the BSEC Member States.

The UNWTO representatives briefed on the new action plan of the Organization, which focuses on “*Priorities for Tourism Recovery*” and informed about their recently released report on “*Global Guidelines to Restart Tourism*”, which outlines the roadmap and priorities of the sector in the coming challenging period. In addition, they elaborated on the presentation entitled “*Travelling in the New Normal*” and suggested ideas as “*Fruit for Thought*” for the elaboration of “*Potential BSEC Coronavirus Protocols*”.

In order to achieve tangible results and agree on a possible concrete framework of further BSEC actions, participants decided to continue the discussion through PERMIS and organize another meeting, if deemed necessary.