



PRESS RELEASE
ON THE FIRST ONLINE COORDINATION MEETING
OF THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON
“BSEC CORONAVIRUS PROTOCOLS” IN TOURISM
OF INTERESTED MEMBER STATES
(28 September 2020)

The *BSEC Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS)* hosted an online meeting of the ad hoc Working Group on “BSEC Coronavirus Protocols” in Tourism on September 28, 2020; representatives from interested BSEC Member States continued the discussion opened on June 11, 2020 during their first video - meeting on the elaboration and possible agreement on a common platform - framework of measures and actions for a safe and gradual recovery of Tourism activities in the BSEC region. To that end, PERMIS prepared and distributed among Member States the “*BSEC Roadmap towards Facilitating the Gradual Flow of Tourism between Interested Member States*” - a draft plan that offers a safe and responsible road to relaunch travel and tourism among the interested Member States.

Representatives from the 8 participating BSEC Member States (*Armenia, Azerbaijan, Hellenic Republic, Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Turkey and Ukraine*) acknowledged that the recent resurgence of infection cases urges for more cooperation and coordination among the Member States to find the ways to support Tourism and help it recover, as it contributes greatly to the region’s GDP and is strongly connected to many other industries. They unanimously supported the creation of an online information platform covering the latest regulations and measures adopted by each country in the context of traveling under the “new Tourism norm”. In this regard, participants stressed the importance of exchanging information and good practices in combating the pandemic in a timely, responsible and coordinated manner, thus enabling the gradual and safe restarting of Tourism among the BSEC Member States. The importance of restoring confidence among the travellers was also underlined by offering them necessary assurance for the safe resumption of Tourism, through coordinated actions and promotional campaigns in the interested BSEC Member States.

The UNWTO representative also addressed the meeting, confirming UNWTO’s support in promoting the new BSEC cooperation platform, and provided useful advice and guidance to that effect.

The ad hoc Working Group agreed to cooperate in taking forward appropriate actions and to meet again within the same framework without setting a date.