



**PRESS RELEASE ON
BSEC PERMIS SECRETARY GENERAL ADDRESSING BLUE ECONOMY FORUM
ON NEW BLACK SEA POLLUTION PROJECT**

(2 March 2021)

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador Michael B. Christides was given a special invitation to address the high-profile *“Blue Economy Forum: The Way to Green Recovery”* yesterday – March 2nd 2021 – organized by the *Delphi Economic Forum* and the *Institute for Sustainable Development* of the EPLO (European Public Law Organization). He introduced the audience of leaders and policy makers to the *“Blueing the Black Sea”* (BBSEA), a project to be implemented by the BSEC PERMIS with the support of the World Bank and funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

The project aims to find ways to tackle marine pollution in the Black Sea – one of the most polluted in the world – by strengthening regional collaboration and private sector engagement and to catalyse blue economy investments. It is in response to the commitments under the *Common Maritime Agenda (CMA)* signed by the six Black Sea littoral states and the Republic of Moldova in 2019. *“This was a watershed: it created a wholly new dynamic in regional dialogue on sustainable Blue Economy development”*, Ambassador Christides told the Forum. He added that the preparatory phase of the program is already underway to help design the key elements of the BBSEA Regional Project proper, which will begin in the second half of 2021.

Two ‘national consultation’ workshops have already been held, one in Turkey and the other in Georgia. *“Participation was great and we expect that the result of these ongoing contacts will deliver valuable elements for the final design of the BBSEA project which, as you see, is actually formulated by the involvement of the stakeholders themselves. The whole procedure will help to identify and prepare the relevant investments that will eventually be carried out”* said Ambassador Christides.

Other national consultations will follow in the Black Sea coastal states of Ukraine, Moldova, Bulgaria, Romania and Russia.

At the end of his address the BSEC Secretary General showed the audience two powerful images of a baby amid a sea of plastic litter that the famous photographer Karl Taylor has given BSEC permission to use as part of its efforts to combat the acute marine pollution in the Black Sea.