



ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Permanent International Secretariat

**PRESS RELEASE ON
ON THE COORDINATION MEETING OF THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP
ON “BSEC CORONAVIRUS PROTOCOLS” IN TOURISM OF INTERESTED
MEMBER STATES**

(5 March 2021, Online)

As the current outbreak of the coronavirus disease continues to develop, the **BSEC Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS)**, closely aligned with the *United Nations World Tourism Organization* (UNWTO) and high-level dignitaries from the *ad hoc Working Group on “BSEC Coronavirus Protocols” in Tourism* reaffirmed their commitment to jointly guide the travel & tourism sector’s response to COVID-19.

To that end, PERMIS hosted a Coordination Meeting of the ad hoc Working Group on “BSEC Coronavirus Protocols” in Tourism, held online on March 5, 2021. Representatives from the participating BSEC Member States discussed strategies and mechanisms to support industry stakeholders, as well as on a possible package of measures and actions to accelerate gradual recovery of tourist flows in the BSEC region. They also exchanged views on the draft of a Joint Statement to be endorsed by the Ministers responsible for Tourism, which outlines the main principles and aims of their above endeavor.

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General underlined that full involvement of the Member States is needed to help the sector’s stakeholders alleviate the grave impact of the pandemic on travel & tourism; moreover, as the imposed “new reality” clearly indicates that domestic tourism and travel between neighboring countries will be among the first to recover, Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES pointed out all the advantages of endorsing and introducing the common cooperation platform “BSEC Coronavirus Protocols” in Tourism.

PERMIS presented also its new website ***BSEC Covid-19 Information Platform***, a new “live” online platform, that hosts the latest regulations and measures adopted by the Member States in the context of the current emergency. Designed as a “one-stop-shop”, www.bsec-covidinfo.org provides all the updates and current prerequisites on travel & tourism, as well as numerous news items from the Black Sea region and beyond covering the latest developments in this field.

Participants exchanged views on possibilities to support the “*Black Sea Tourism Activator 2021*”, a new initiative that PERMIS has put forward in order to promote the most innovative solutions and ideas in all 13 Member States that can help the tourism sector recover faster and can be applied across the Black Sea region.

Addressing the meeting, Mr. Peter JANECH, Dep. Director, Europe, United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), confirmed that UNWTO stands ready to work closely with the BSEC Secretariat and the Member States and shared the latest developments and progress, as well as trends and future prospects for the industry.

The ad hoc Working Group agreed to step up the coordination towards achieving swift and tangible results.

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