



ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION
Permanent International Secretariat
Istanbul / Turkey

Fax: (+90212) 2296336 E-mail: info@bsec-organization.org www.bsec-organization.org

PRESS RELEASE
ON
THE PRIORITIES OF THE RUSSIAN CHAIRMANSHIP-IN-OFFICE OF BSEC

Mr. Evgeny STANISLAVOV, Director of the Department of Economic Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, representing the Russian Chairmanship-in-Office of BSEC, presented the priorities of the Chairmanship to the BSEC Member States, Related Bodies, Observers and Sectoral Dialogue Partners, at the BSEC Headquarters in Istanbul, on 22 January 2016.

Mr. STANISLAVOV was welcomed by the Secretary General of the BSEC PERMIS H.E. Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES, who expressed his best wishes for the success and the fulfillment of the priorities of the Russian Chairmanship.

In his statement at the BSEC Headquarters, Mr. STANISLAVOV stated that the Chairmanship will seek to increase the economic impact of the Organization's activities. To this end, the Russian Chairmanship plans to further implement the BSEC Economic Agenda adopted in 2012.

Mr. STANISLAVOV informed that the Chairmanship will aim to lay the groundwork for the events which will be organized to mark the 25th anniversary of the Organization in 2017. He added that the Russian Chairmanship will work on elaborating recommendations for improving the efficiency of BSEC activities and for strengthening its financial basis.

Economic, trade and customs cooperation, transport and tourism, energy, emergency assistance, agriculture, healthcare, scientific and technical cooperation, as well as combating organized crime were identified as the sectoral priorities of the Chairmanship.

In this regard, among other activities, the Russian Chairmanship will work towards the expanded use of funds for SMEs to facilitate their access to finance and international markets. The Chairmanship will also promote dialogue on e-commerce and trade facilitation procedures in the Black Sea region.

Mr. STANISLAVOV announced that the implementation of the Russian initiative to develop multimodal cargo and passenger ferry lines in the Black Sea region will be continued, with a view to eventually sign a memorandum of understanding among the BSEC Member States. He stated that the work on the implementation of the two BSEC flagship infrastructure projects, namely, the projects on the Black Sea Ring Highway and the Development of the Motorways of the Sea in the BSEC Region, will also continue.

In the sphere of energy cooperation, it was announced that the Chairmanship will particularly focus on the development of energy infrastructure as a whole, including oil, gas and electricity. In this context, Mr. STANISLAVOV referred to the efforts to create an enabling environment for the realization of the Black Sea Electric Power Ring project.

In the area of cooperation in combatting organized crime, the Russian Chairmanship will focus on combatting human trafficking and extremist activities, as well as ensuring security during the preparation of major international events. These events will include sports events such as the FIFA World Cup 2018 which will be hosted by the Russian Federation.

The Chairmanship will continue to promote relations with the BSEC Related Bodies. Mr. STANISLAVOV added that Russia will encourage strengthened cooperation between BSEC and the UN system, while continuing to make efforts to intensify interaction with the EU on an equal and mutually beneficial basis, primarily in the fields of transport, environmental protection, innovation, ICT and combatting terrorism and organized crime.

The Russian Chairmanship will strive to promote a more active involvement of BSEC Observers and Sectoral Dialogue Partners in regional cooperation and at the same time consider the possibility of attracting international financial institutions, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the BRICS New Development Bank (NDB BRICS) and the Silkroad Foundation, to the implementation of regional infrastructure projects within BSEC.

During its Chairmanship which covers the period of 1 January 2016-30 June 2016, the Russian Federation envisages to implement a comprehensive calendar of events which is expected to contribute to enhancing regional cooperation in a number of key areas. In addition to the Meeting of the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Sochi, 1 July 2016), the Meetings of the Ministers of Transport, Health and Emergency Situations, the Conference of the Ministers of Culture and Tourism, as well as the Meetings of the Heads of Customs Services and National Statistical Agencies will constitute the highlights of the calendar of events of the Russian Chairmanship.