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**PRESS RELEASE ON THE PARTICIPATION OF
THE BSEC PERMIS SECRETARY GENERAL TO THE ATHENS ENERGY FORUM**

The Secretary General of the BSEC PERMIS Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES participated in the Athens Energy Forum, organized on 1-3 February 2016, in Athens, Greece.

During his address to the Forum as a Panelist, Secretary General CHRISTIDES informed the participants about the objectives and activities of BSEC and its Related Bodies, stressing that today, BSEC is the oldest, most representative and institutionally most mature intergovernmental cooperation organization in the region.

He underlined that despite the difficult times being witnessed in the wider Black Sea region, BSEC manages to function and continues to pursue its objectives, which adds even more value to its existence, by serving as a confidence building mechanism and an open window for dialogue and understanding.

The Secretary General highlighted the significance of the wider Black Sea region for the production and distribution of energy to the world markets. He acknowledged that energy and climate change are approached together today, stating that this has led to bringing the issues of energy efficiency, energy conservation, alternative and renewable sources of energy to the forefront of the agendas of all BSEC Member States.

Referring to the activities of the BSEC Working Group on Energy, Secretary General CHRISTIDES informed the participants of the Forum about the recently established "BSEC Green Energy Network", which encompasses administrative bodies and organizations promoting renewable energy sources, energy efficiency measures and policies. He stated that the Network, which currently has 45 members, remains open to interested parties and invited all, including Greek businesses, to take advantage of the potential the Network offers.

Secretary General CHRISTIDES added that BSEC, together with one of its Related Bodies, namely the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank, can provide initial information, networking services and banking services for those interested in expanding their businesses in the region.

BSEC PERMIS Secretary General Ambassador CHRISTIDES also provided information on other energy related topics which BSEC is currently addressing, namely, the gradual establishment of an integrated Black Sea Energy Market; cooperation in developing electrical interconnections among the BSEC Member States; launching of a BSEC Energy Conservation Campaign; and cooperation in the exploration and extraction of hydrocarbon resources.