

# NINE 'CLOCK



## **Romanian takes over BSEC Chairmanship**

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Romania took over the chairmanship-in-office of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) organization in January.

As one of the three European Union Member States in the Black Sea region and as a founding Member State of BSEC, Romania's main aim in exercising its Chairmanship-in-Office (CiO) is to enhance the cooperation and dialogue within the Organization, with the twin purpose to strengthen and increase the economic cooperation and to make a positive impact on the relations among Governments of all its Member States. Prior to the current CiO which will be exercised between January and June 2011, Romania held a similar position in 1996, 2000, 2006.

In his speech addressed to the heads of diplomatic missions to Bucharest last week, President Traian Basescu said that 'we will lay stress on the efficiency and the relevance of the organization, on the capacity to implement projects, on economic cooperation and on capitalizing the statute of EU observer.' On the other hand, the Romanian head of state said that "2001 needs to become the year of revitalizing the Black Sea synergy by involving the European external Action Service (EEAS) in the regional issues. We attach great importance to the development of civil society in the Black Sea region states and we remind, in this regard, Romania's commitment in this field, by the organization of the annual NGOs Black Sea forum."

According to the Romanian foreign ministry, the Romanian CiO believes that in an increasingly intertwined economic and institutional environment, time is ripe for identifying the instruments and modalities through which the Organization can enhance its relevance for all its Member States, and increase the attractiveness of the region.

Hence, the overriding priority objective for Romania's CiO mandate will be strengthening the economic component of BSEC and streamlining BSEC projects in line with existing financial resources.

Romania recognizes and supports the undeniable political features of the Organization. A sound economic cooperation and continuous dialogue, including on the political tier, creates solid ground for BSEC Member States and beyond, the foreign ministry underlines.

BSEC is a regional organization whose principles and objectives seek to develop and diversify

bilateral and multilateral economic cooperation on the basis of the principles and rules of international law. BSEC was among the first initiatives launched in the Black Sea region, on 25 June 1992, when the Heads of States and Governments of eleven countries – Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine – signed the “Istanbul Declaration” and launched the BSEC Initiative.