

BSEC meeting in New York to gather Russian and Georgian ministers

An informal meeting of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) will bring together senior officials of Georgia and Russia for the first time since last month's brief war between the two countries, officials from the permanent secretariat of the BSEC based in İstanbul said yesterday.

Georgian Foreign Minister Ekaterine Tkeshelashvili and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Alekseev are expected to participate in the meeting, which will take place in New York on Thursday on the sidelines of the 63rd session of the UN General Assembly, the same officials said. Albanian Foreign Minister Lulzim Basha will chair the meeting in his capacity as the chairman-in-office of the BSEC, a statement from the secretariat said, noting that it has become customary practice for the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to convene in an informal format every year in New York during the general debate of the UN General Assembly.

"At this year's informal meeting, it is expected that the ministers will address the question of enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the BSEC in relation to issues that are of interest to all member states," the statement also said. In addition to Turkey, which originally initiated the establishment of the BSEC in 1992, Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, which are littoral states of the Black Sea, as well as Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Greece, Moldova and Serbia are members of the body. *İstanbul Today's Zaman*