



ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION  
**Permanent International Secretariat**

*Istanbul / Turkey*

Fax: (+90212) 2296336 E-mail: [info@bsec-organization.org](mailto:info@bsec-organization.org) [www.bsec-organization.org](http://www.bsec-organization.org)

---

**PRESS RELEASE ON  
THE 33<sup>rd</sup> MEETING OF THE BSEC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
(Bucharest, 11 December 2015)**

The 33rd Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) was held on 11 December 2015, in Bucharest, Romania. H.E. Mr. Lazăr COMĂNESCU, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania and the BSEC Chairman-in-Office, chaired the meeting.

In addition to the representatives of the BSEC Member States, the representatives of the BSEC Related Bodies, Observers and Sectoral Dialogue Partners also participated in the Council Meeting.

In the working session, the Secretary General of the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat H.E. Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES presented his Progress Report regarding the operations and activities of the Secretariat during the second semester of 2015.

The Ministers made statements on issues regarding the latest developments in the region and the strengthening of the Organization to meet the new challenges. They underlined the strong need to continue the reform efforts in BSEC. Reference was made to the importance of the implementation of the BSEC Economic Agenda 2012<sup>1</sup> for maximizing the potential of cooperation in the Black Sea region and the preparations for the 25th Anniversary of the Organization to be marked in 2017.

At the Council Meeting, the significance of promoting the project and result oriented character of BSEC, strengthening its operational capabilities and consolidating its human and financial resources was reiterated. The Ministers highlighted the importance of focusing on developing viable and bankable joint projects which can contribute to sustainable development and the improvement of the lives of the people. In this regard, special reference was made to the full operationalization of the Project Management Unit within the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat and the need to replenish the BSEC Project Development Fund.

The representatives of the Member States confirmed their willingness to fully tap on the cooperation potential with Observers and Sectoral Dialogue Partners of the Organization, as well as other partners and institutions. Particular reference was made to enhancing BSEC's interaction with the United Nations system and the European Union.

At the closing session, the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs adopted Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations on various issues, including, financial issues; the renewal of Observer and

---

<sup>1</sup> The "BSEC Economic Agenda Towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership" was adopted by the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Belgrade, 11 June 2012) and later endorsed by the BSEC Heads of State and Government during the BSEC 20th Anniversary Summit (Istanbul, 26 June 2012). It was introduced to face the new challenges and opportunities in the global and local environment. It is a comprehensive regional strategy which sets goals in 17 priority areas of action and provides recommendations to further strengthen the Organization.

Sectoral Dialogue Partnership status of various States, International Organizations and Institutions; the appointment of Country-Coordinators to some of the BSEC Working Groups; the events and activities of BSEC and its Related Bodies; Memoranda of Understanding with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the International Union of Railways; appointments to several positions at the Permanent International Secretariat of the Organization; as well as the implementation of the BSEC Public Communication Strategy.

During the final session, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between BSEC and the Council of the Baltic Sea States by the Secretary General and the Director General of the Permanent International Secretariats of the said two organizations.

At the conclusion of the meeting, a ceremony took place whereby Romania handed over the Chairmanship-in-Office of BSEC to the Russian Federation. Russia will officially assume the Chairmanship as of 1 January 2016, for a period of six months until 30 June 2016.

During its Chairmanship period corresponding to the second half of 2015, Romania, under the motto "Building Stability, Enhancing Connectivity", guided and promoted the activities of the Organization, focusing on some of the key areas of BSEC cooperation. The formal and informal meetings of the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Bucharest, 11 December 2015 and New York, 29 September 2015) and the meeting of the BSEC Ministers of Transport (Bucharest, 21 October 2015), constituted some of the highlights of the calendar of events of the Romanian Chairmanship.

### **Background Information:**

BSEC was launched as a regionally owned initiative, with Turkey's lead, on 25 June 1992 at the Istanbul Summit, at a time when regional cooperation was most needed in the transformation process that the countries of the region were undergoing. The idea that stronger economic cooperation among the Black Sea countries would enhance peace, stability and prosperity in the region was the underlying philosophy behind BSEC. With the entry into force of its Charter in 1999, BSEC was officially transformed from an initiative into a regional cooperation organization.

Today, BSEC serves as a forum for cooperation in a wide range of areas and a platform for political dialogue for its 12 Member States.<sup>2</sup> The BSEC countries encompass an area of approximately 20 million square kilometers with 335 million people. Agriculture and agro-industry, banking and finance, combating organized crime, culture, customs matters, education, emergency assistance, energy, environmental protection, exchange of statistical data and information, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, information and communication technologies, institutional renewal and good governance, science and technology, SMEs, tourism, trade and economic development and transport are among the fields of cooperation within the framework of the Organization.

BSEC has 4 Related Bodies<sup>3</sup>, 16 Observers<sup>4</sup> and 16 Sectoral Dialogue Partners.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> The 12 BSEC Member States are Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine.

<sup>3</sup> The Parliamentary Assembly of the BSEC (PABSEC), the BSEC Business Council (BSEC BC), the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB) and the International Center for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) are the four Related Bodies of BSEC.

<sup>4</sup> Austria, Belarus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Egypt, Germany, Israel, Italy, Poland, Slovak Republic, Tunisia, USA, the European Commission, Black Sea Commission, Energy Charter Secretariat and International Black Sea Club have Observer status in BSEC.

<sup>5</sup> Hungary, Japan, Republic of Korea, Montenegro, Slovenia, Iran, Black Sea International Shipowners Association (BINSA), Black and Azov Seas Ports Association (BASPA), Union of Road Transport Association in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Region (BSEC-URTA), Black Sea Region Association of Shipbuilders and Shiprepairers (BRASS), Black Sea University Network (BSUN), Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR), Danube Commission, International Network for SMEs (INSME), World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Black Sea Broadcasting Regulatory Authorities Forum (BRAAF) have Sectoral Dialogue Partnership status in BSEC.