



**PRESS RELEASE ON
13TH CONGRESS OF RECTORS FROM THE BLACK SEA
UNIVERSITIES NETWORK (BSUN)**

(Thessaoloniki, 18-19 June)

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General participated at *the 13th Congress of Rectors from the Black Sea Universities Network (BSUN)*, which took place in Thessaloniki on 18-19 June 2018, in parallel with *the International Conference under the title "UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in the Black Sea Region: from Science to Implementation"*.

The BSUN was established an ad hoc International Organization in 1998, following the relevant proposal of the PABSEC *Committee on Culture, Education and Social Affairs*. BSEC PERMIS decided to enhance its collaboration with the BSUN International Secretariat in the field of higher Education and together with Prof. Dr. Eden MAMUT, Director of the BSUN, elaborated a wide range of possibilities for cooperation and coordination, especially on issues concerning higher Education and Science & Technology.

Given the above background, Ambassador CHRISTIDES underlined in his opening statement at the above event that representatives from the BSUN, whenever useful, could participate in meetings of the relevant BSEC Working Groups, thus, complementing the efforts of both sides and enhancing the effectiveness of their efforts.

Ambassador CHRISTIDES underlined also the need for securing new funding sources for joint projects and informed participants on the *Black Sea Project Promotion Facility (BSPPF)*, which can finance projects involving entities from more BSEC Member States and which have a distinct influence in the economic development of the region.

During the Meeting of the Rectors, many interesting views were exchanged on how to increase and deepen cooperation among the BSUN Member Universities. Among the various issues discussed was that of the freedom - and its limits - enjoyed by Universities as vehicles molding, in many ways, the future of mankind. It was argued that if we wish to preserve, in a sustainable way, Life and Nature for the next generations, then today's "*techno-centered*" development should become more *nature-protective*. Participants also agreed that BSUN should focus on establishing better collaboration and co-education relations among its members, also by jointly using infrastructure and capacities, whenever possible.



Participants underlined the importance of finding new ways of cooperation between Universities and Governments, as there is still a lot of “misunderstanding” characterizing their relations. Ambassador CHRISTIDES reflected that the BSEC Organization and its relevant WGs could play a positive role in this issue, being an inter-governmental entity promoting cooperation and coordination among State authorities and other institutions, like Universities. The PERMIS Secretary General also mentioned the initiative of the “modern Silk Road” as a tool to improve overall connectivity among Europe and Asia and underlined the new horizons it opens for Universities in the research and elaboration of activities that will respond not only to the hopes of many for opening new means and ways of communication, but also to those expressing concerns on the actual merits of this initiative; all these questions and challenges can be elaborated and addressed, in their academic context, by the involvement of BSUN Universities.

Finally, during the Congress, the Presidency of BSUN for the next two years (2018 – 2020) passed to the Rector of the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki, Prof. Pericles A. Mitkas.