



## ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

### Permanent International Secretariat

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#### **PRESS RELEASE ON THE HIGH-LEVEL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TOURISM AND ECONOMIC GROWTH Sofia, 13 February 2018**

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General, Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES, upon the invitation of the Bulgarian Presidency of the European Union, participated in the High-Level *International Conference on Tourism and Economic Growth*, held in Sofia on 13 February 2018, back-to-back with the *informal Meeting of the Ministers of Tourism of the EU Member States*.

The High-Level Conference, which attracted the participation of Ministers and other government officials, representatives of international organizations and non-governmental institutions, as well as other stakeholders involved in Tourism, focused on three major issues: I. *Tourism and Economic Growth – factors for Tourism Development*; II. *Tourism and Security – Geopolitical and Geo-economic aspects*; and III. *Europe and China 2018 – new dimensions, challenges and opportunities*.

The BSEC PERMIS Secretary General was invited as speaker in the first and second panel; in his interventions he pointed out the importance of Tourism cooperation for the Black Sea region and outlined the substantial contribution of the BSEC Organization to the development of Tourism coordination and synergies in the area.

On the sidelines of the Conference Ambassador CHRISTIDES had a bilateral working-meeting with the Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria, H.E. Mrs. Nikolina ANGELKOVA. As Bulgaria holds the Coordinatorship of the relevant BSEC Working Group, a number of concrete issues for further cooperation in the field of Tourism were discussed.

Accompanied by H.E. Minister ANGELKOVA Ambassador CHRISTIDES was also received by the President of the Bulgarian Parliament, H.E. Ms. Tsveta KARAYANCHEVA. The two sides exchanged views on Bulgaria's important role for the development of tourism partnerships in the BSEC region and on the positive contribution of PABSEC in enhancing the climate of dialogue and understanding among the people of the BSEC Member States.

Ambassador CHRISTIDES held also his first working-meeting with the new UNWTO Secretary General, H.E. Ambassador Zurab POLOLIKASHVILI, with whom he extensively consulted on a number of ongoing joint projects and on issues concerning the future cooperation between the two organizations.

On the sidelines of the Conference, Secretary General Ambassador CHRISTIDES had also the chance to meet with other high-level participants with whom he exchanged views on tourism issues.