



PRIORITIES OF THE BULGARIAN CHAIRMANSHIP-IN-OFFICE (1 January - 30 June 2019)

“SEA OF OPPORTUNITIES”

I. PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVES

On the 1st of January 2019, Bulgaria assumed the Chairmanship-in-Office of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation - the most representative and institutionally developed organization in the Black Sea region. Bulgaria believes that the wider Black Sea area continues to provide significant opportunities for cooperation and fruitful interaction. That is why, under the motto **“Sea of Opportunities”**, Bulgaria will aspire to revitalize BSEC efficiency as to provide more concrete and visible results for the citizens of the member-states, and to improve the attractiveness of the region for foreign investors and tourists.

Determined to make use of the great potential of the Organization as a platform of dialogue, Bulgaria reiterates its support to the BSEC Economic Agenda aimed at highlighting the comparative advantages of the region, the priority sectors for investments, and the economic role of the region in the context of the European economy.

Affirming the role of BSEC as an active and reliable partner on regional and global level, as well as enhancing interaction with other international organizations and initiatives will constitute another important emphasis of the Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-Office. As one of the three European Union Member States in the Black Sea region, Bulgaria will continue its efforts to further develop the productive interaction between BSEC and EU, and to keep the Black Sea region high on the EU agenda. BSEC and EU, facing common challenges and opportunities in the wider Black Sea region, share a mutual interest in developing a meaningful relationship and in establishing a beneficial cooperation for the implementation of agreed projects and activities at a regional level.



II. SECTORAL PRIORITIES

The success of BSEC depends on the development and effective implementation of viable common projects. Hence, the Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-Office will continue promoting sectoral cooperation in all areas of BSEC activity, with special emphasis on **transport, culture, and environmental protection**. The advancement of closer interaction among the business communities of the Member States, as well as the reinforcement of cooperation between the public and the private sectors will constitute an important aspect for implementing these priorities into BSEC agenda over the next six months.

Building upon the achievements of the previous Chairmanships, Bulgaria will aim to foster cooperation in the field of **transport** as one of the priority areas of its Chairmanship. Efforts in this field will aim to contribute to the further advancement of sustainable transport systems, to the effective utilization of the intra-region capacity and growing transit potential, and to the development of road and maritime infrastructure in the Black Sea region.

Culture, with its potential to build bridges and unite peoples, is another priority axis of the Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-Office. The promotion of intercultural dialogue, the effective protection of cultural heritage, as well as the better incorporation of culture in tourism activities within and outside the BSEC region, remain relevant goals of the Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-Office. In the field of culture, Bulgaria will further seek to promote concrete joint initiatives and well-prepared, locally owned projects.

Environmental protection is a key element for the facilitation of sustainable development to meet the needs of the current generation, while preserving potentials and opportunities for the future generations. One of the aims of the Bulgarian Chairmanship is to promote cooperative activities in the BSEC region in the field of environmental protection. Committed to the efforts to facilitate sustainable growth also in the marine and maritime sectors, the Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-Office will endeavour to promote the cooperation between BSEC and the EU in the framework of the Integrated Maritime Policy and the European Commission's project "Facility for Blue Growth".



The creation of synergy between BSEC and other formats of regional cooperation will be one of the goals of the Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-Office of the Organisation. Taking advantage of the recognition of the growing significance and potential of the wider Black Sea region is of priority interest for BSEC Member States. In this respect, improving the sustainability and efficiency of BSEC, developing the regional cooperation in all its dimensions, as well as enhancing interaction with other international organizations and initiatives is instrumental. The Bulgarian Chairmanship will strive to improve the visibility of BSEC, emphasizing on the huge potential of the Black Sea Region as a strategic bridge between Europe and Asia.

III. PRINCIPAL EVENTS

The calendar of Bulgarian Chairmanship includes a number of high-level events in different areas of cooperation:

- 40th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States;
- Meeting of Ministers in Charge of Culture of the BSEC Member States;
- Informal Meeting of Ministers in Charge of Transport of the BSEC Member States;
- High Level BSEC-EU Conference in Brussels.

