

PRIORITIES OF THE ROMANIAN BSEC CHAIRMANSHIP-IN-OFFICE (1 JANUARY - 30 JUNE 2020)

Romania attaches great importance to regional cooperation and has devoted constant and particular attention to the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC). This semester, Romania holds, for the sixth time, the mandate of BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office.

Romania's actions in its capacity as BSEC Chairmanship will aim at ensuring that intergovernmental economic cooperation can bring its due share to the sustainable development of the wider Black Sea region and to enhancing its peace, stability and prosperity, in accordance to the commitments embodied in the BSEC Charter.

The motto of the Romanian Chairmanship, "*Bridging Shores through Enhancing Cohesion*" illustrates Romania's belief that the prerequisite for future consolidation of the BSEC should be built around cohesion, interconnectivity and dialogue. Under this heading, the Romanian Chairmanship will strive to forge a more result-oriented cooperation by building confidence and trust, encouraging dialogue and constructive action with the aim to take further steps to deliver on the core mission of BSEC - shared prosperity through promoting better connectivity within the region.

During its mandate, the Romanian Chairmanship will be engaged in thorough consultations with the BSEC Member States, with a view to finding the common denominator regarding our joint action. The Chairmanship will engage in an all-inclusive, open, transparent and constructive approach.

I. Main objectives

The Romanian Chairmanship's major objective is to increase the profile and the relevance of the Organization for its Member States, by ensuring that the primary objectives pursued will be the continued improvement of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization. To this end, Romania stands ready to facilitate finding common solutions to the most pressing institutional issues BSEC is currently facing and to deliver sustained efforts in order to address shortcomings hampering BSEC's activity and its institutional capacity. Hence, tackling the urgent pending issues of the rotation of the BSEC Chairmanship and the persistence of waivers in assuming the BSEC Chairmanship will be a key priority.

Furthermore, Romania will capitalize on the progress made already by the previous Chairmanships on improving the modalities of work and the institutional framework of cooperation. In this regard, the Chairmanship will endeavor to keep up the pace of the ongoing reform process and to advance the discussions on increasing the efficiency of the BSEC's Working Groups.

The Romanian Chairmanship will also pay a particular attention to further enhancing the project-oriented approach of BSEC and ensuring continuity and substantive progress in the implementation of the goals set forth by the "*Economic Agenda towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership*" (2012).

Taking advantage of the increased EU political and financial engagement in the regional cooperation in the Black Sea, with a direct, positive impact on our economies and societies, the Romanian Chairmanship will strive to further develop a flexible, result-oriented and closer BSEC-EU cooperation to the benefit of all BSEC Member States.

Romania believes that strengthening the BSEC-EU cooperation, by promoting and facilitating common initiatives for the sustainable development of the Black Sea region, could further increase

the EU's commitment of financial and technical resources to be devoted to the region and to the BSEC and will enhance the BSEC's visibility and its project-oriented character.

The Romanian Chairmanship also aims at substantiating the interaction of BSEC with the Observers, Sectoral Dialogue Partners and the Related Bodies, in order to enhance the importance of BSEC and turn this interaction to the benefit of its Member States. The Romanian Chairmanship will work in cooperation with business communities of the Member States and will concentrate its efforts at strengthening the BSEC's entrepreneurship dimension.

II. Sectoral priorities

Transport and Connectivity

Transport and connectivity play an important role in fostering sustainable economic growth and enhancing trade relations across the Black Sea region. For this objective reason, the overall connectivity among the BSEC Member States will constitute a key priority for the Romanian Chairmanship.

Building upon the achievements of the previous Chairmanships, the Romanian Chairmanship will provide support to the ongoing efforts aimed at:

- developing the intermodal transport within the Black Sea region;
- strengthening transport connectivity and facilitating border crossing in the BSEC area;
- developing new technologies and regulations for increasing efficiency and security of transport;
- improving cooperation in road safety.

In this regard, an emphasis will be placed on: evaluating the opportunity for officially recognizing the Certificates of Access to Profession for professional drivers in road-freight transport inside BSEC area; launching e-CMR pilot project in BSEC area; elaborating the principles for the Strategy for Improvement of Road Safety in BSEC area.

Particular attention will be given to the development of international transport routes across the BSEC region. The Romanian Chairmanship will follow closely the proper implementation of the objectives and initiatives foreseen by the Memorandum of Understanding on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region, as well as the Memoranda on the development of the Black Sea Ring Highway and of the Motorways of the Sea.

In this sense, the Romanian Chairmanship will convene a meeting of the Ministers of Transport of the BSEC Member States, preceded by a preparatory meeting of the Working Group on Transport, in order to discuss the current status and the perspectives of cooperation in the region.

Environment and Green Energy

The Black Sea basin is a valuable natural asset of great environmental and economic importance. The Romanian Chairmanship acknowledges the need - more now than ever - for sustainable and result oriented cooperation in the field of environmental protection, aimed at tackling efficiently global environmental challenges and motivating social responsibility.

Through the activities to be undertaken, the Romanian Chairmanship will seek to facilitate inter- and intra-regional cooperation, in order to achieve sustainable development in the BSEC region. To this end, the Romanian Chairmanship envisages organizing a new meeting of the Working Group on Environmental Protection, as well as a regional event to improve the awareness on pollution with plastics and microplastics in the Black Sea and to facilitate exchange of knowledge and good practices to the benefit of sustainable blue growth.

At the same time, the Romanian Chairmanship will continue supporting efforts to achieve sustainable energy development in the Black Sea region and to advance regional cooperation in the area of *green energy* by supporting the ongoing activities of the BSEC Green Energy Network and hosting a Green Energy Investment Forum.

Sustainable Development Goals

Renewed efforts are necessary by all actors involved - governments, local authorities, civil society, business and academia - given the fact that the agreed objectives for combating climate change, in line with the UN 2030 Agenda, are still to be reached. The regional dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) implementation has to be developed primarily by a better communication and by partnerships among the States in the region. To this purpose, the Romanian Chairmanship will organize a high-level event with the aim of facilitating the best practices and knowledge sharing in order to identify new directions to be followed for conceiving the policies addressing the implementation of SDGs in the Black Sea area.

Economic Development and Competitiveness

The Romanian Chairmanship will encourage initiatives and activities in support of the sustainable economic development, as well as improving the resilience and the competitiveness of businesses. The Chairmanship will endeavor to promote increased cooperation among the Black Sea business communities and will carry on enhancing the innovative potential of SMEs, including through the support of competitiveness clusters.

Moreover, having in mind that in the context of global economic development, based on research and innovation, the business environment faces new challenges with regard to the digitalization and the need to rapidly adapt to the new market demands in order to remain competitive and viable. Hence, the Romanian Chairmanship will support exchanging best practices in developing a more competitive business environment for companies involved in the circular economy and enhancing sustainable competitiveness.