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**PRESS RELEASE ON**  
**THE PARTICIPATION OF BSEC PERMIS SECRETARY GENERAL**  
**AMBASSADOR MICHAEL B. CHRISTIDES**  
**TO THESSALONIKI SUMMIT 2016**

The Secretary of the BSEC PERMIS, Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES, took part in the International Conference titled *Thessaloniki Summit 2016*, organized by the Federation of Industries of Northern Greece (SVVE) on 13-14 October 2016.

The Secretary General participated in the panel titled “*Long Term Investment: Connectivity and Infrastructure Development in Southeast Europe*”. In his intervention, he underlined the significance of international regional cooperation for the economic development of States in the broader region of Southeast Europe and the Black Sea.

He emphasized that enhanced regional cooperation, especially among neighbouring countries, is not only an effective way to support the overall economic development of the States involved, but serves also as a precious vehicle for the establishment of a “culture” of cooperation and synergy among nations.

Secretary General Ambassador CHRISTIDES further shed light on the experience in this regard gained from the almost 25-year long existence and activities of BSEC in the Black Sea region, underlining the many achievements and mentioning the challenges ahead. The Secretary General informed the high-level audience on the efforts of BSEC and its Related Bodies to further enhance connectivity in the geostrategic region of the wider Black Sea, by engaging in far-reaching infrastructure projects in the transport sector and by participating in initiatives related to the establishment of new connection routes between Europe and Asia, such as the "New Silk Road" concept promoted mainly by China.

The Secretary General pointed out also the positive role of the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB) as a BSEC Related Body, adding that the BSTDB, which was established as a result of regional cooperation among the BSEC Member States, is an additional financial institution at the disposal of SMEs and entrepreneurs.

Finally, Secretary General Ambassador CHRISTIDES expressed his confidence that on the occasion of its 25th anniversary to be celebrated in 2017, BSEC will be able to further improve its efficiency and performance, thus consolidating its role as a valuable instrument for increasing regional economic cooperation to support the overall development of its Member States and to contribute to peace, stability and prosperity in a vitally geostrategic region of the world.