



**ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION
Permanent International Secretariat**

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**PRESS RELEASE
ON**

**THE VISIT OF THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF
THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY, H.E. AMBASSADOR AHMET YILDIZ,
TO THE BSEC HEADQUARTERS**

The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, H.E. Ambassador Ahmet YILDIZ, representing the Turkish Chairmanship-in-Office of BSEC, paid a working visit to the BSEC Headquarters in Istanbul, on 17 January 2017.

At the BSEC Headquarters, Deputy Minister H.E. Ambassador YILDIZ presented the priorities of the Turkish Chairmanship to the representatives of the BSEC Member States, Related Bodies, Observers and Sectoral Dialogue Partners. These priorities will constitute the roadmap for the Organization during the first semester of 2017, culminating with the 25th Anniversary Summit of BSEC which will be hosted by the Republic of Turkey.

Deputy Minister H.E. Ambassador YILDIZ was welcomed by the Secretary General of the BSEC PERMIS H.E. Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES, who wished success to the Turkish Chairmanship and expressed the readiness of the Secretariat to extend all necessary support for the fulfillment of the priorities identified by the Chairmanship.

In his statement at the BSEC Headquarters, Deputy Minister H.E. Ambassador YILDIZ underlined that the efforts of the Chairmanship will mainly focus on increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization and its Secretariat, institutional reform and the streamlining of existing rules, procedures and processes. He stated that to further contribute to the efficiency of the Permanent International Secretariat of the Organization, the Republic of Turkey, as the Host Country of the BSEC Headquarters, will fully finance the relocation of the premises of the Secretariat to provide it with a more modern working environment.

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Ambassador Ahmet YILDIZ announced that the main theme of the Turkish Chairmanship-in-Office has been identified as “*Strengthening*

Partnership for Sustainable Development’, considering that the international community has set the Sustainable Development Goals as a key priority for the next 15 years. He highlighted the interest of BSEC in contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which has already been recognized in the UN General Assembly Decision titled “*Cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization*”, dated 21 November 2016.

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs H.E. Ambassador YILDIZ informed the participants that the Turkish Chairmanship will pursue a number of sectoral priorities, which will also help BSEC to contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. These priorities include agriculture and agro-industry, trade and economic development, health and pharmaceuticals, strengthening the role of SMEs and supporting inclusive businesses, banking and finance, energy, tourism and education.

The Deputy Minister stated that during its term, the Turkish Chairmanship will coordinate closely with the BSEC Related Bodies and work for the active involvement of BSEC Observers and Sectoral Dialogue Partners in addressing regional cooperation issues. The Chairmanship will also continue the efforts to further enhance BSEC’s relations with other regional and international organizations.

The visit of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, H.E. Ambassador Ahmet YILDIZ, was concluded with a press conference and a reception hosted by the Turkish Chairmanship-in-Office at the BSEC Headquarters.

As is known, the Republic of Turkey has assumed the Chairmanship-in-Office of BSEC as of 1 January 2017, for a term of six months ending on 30 June 2017. During this period, the Turkish Chairmanship envisages to implement a comprehensive calendar of events which is expected to contribute to enhancing regional cooperation in a number of key areas. In addition to the BSEC 25th Anniversary Summit, the meeting of the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, as well as the meetings of the Ministers of Agriculture, Economy and Health constitute the highlights of the calendar of events of the Turkish Chairmanship.