



Union pour la Méditerranée  
Union for the Mediterranean  
الإتحاد من أجل المتوسط

Intervention by the UfM Secretary General  
Mr. Nasser Kamel

40th Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Black Sea  
Economic Cooperation  
*Sofia, Bulgaria – 28 June 2019*

*Your Excellency Ekaterina ZAHARIEVA*

*Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria and Chairperson-in-office of the  
Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation,*

*Your Excellencies,*

*Representatives of the BSEC Member-States, observers and related  
institutions,*

I am very honored to address you today, in this beautiful and monumental capital of Sofia.

First and foremost, I would like thank Minister Zaharieva, both for the kind invitation to participate in this Ministerial, as for the extraordinary efforts that she has personally put into regional cooperation.

Not only in terms of Black Sea Cooperation, with this very successful Chairmanship that focused on such important issues as Transport, Culture and Environment protection. But also, if I may add, at the Union for the Mediterranean level, where her role and Bulgaria's growing engagement is very much appreciated.

Regional development is significantly enhanced by the development of a regional approach to the challenges that we're facing, be them environmental or political or socio-economic. This is a common feature that BSEC and the UfM share.

We understand the importance of the implementation and enactment of reforms at a national level.

But we aspire at having an impact at a larger level.

By focusing on issues as relevant to the region as trade and economic development, energy, transport, environment protection, and so many others, BSEC can bring these subjects to the regional agenda and build a common ground in which member-states understand that, through cooperation and the creation of synergies between their national efforts, better projects and bigger positive impacts can be achieved.

This is the role of international organizations.

To guarantee that its member-states contributions to its common efforts are beneficial to all of them.

That through those joint-actions the results will be better than individual approaches by individual national states. Regional challenges require regional answers.

At the Union for the Mediterranean this is also our goal.

As you are probably aware – even because we share a number of Member-States, like Bulgaria, but also Turkey, Romania, Greece, Albania, as well as many of the observer countries to BSEC – the Union for the Mediterranean is comprised of 43 member-states, from all around the Euro-Mediterranean region.

Our governance is slightly different, as we count with a Co-Presidency, North and South, today assured by the European Commission and Jordan.

But our goals and areas of work are very similar to yours in BSEC.

When looking at our respective missions and our areas of cooperation – and by merely looking at a map – it is clear to understand that the UfM and BSEC should be working together in the pursuit of their objectives.

This interaction has actually started already, particularly since the signing of a MoU between the two institutions in 2015.

But I would like, again, to commend the Bulgarian Chairmanship for having so actively promoted this collaboration, both at technical as at political level.

We believe the UfM and BSEC can complement their actions, as to better guarantee the implementation of their respective agendas.

We will gain from sharing best-practices and experiences in implementing the action-plans and initiatives decided at the different Ministerial meetings.

The sectorial working groups of BSEC and the UfM Platforms for regional dialogue can also share the results of their discussions and work on the creation of synergies between their respective work.

We find these dialogue platforms and working groups particularly useful instruments for building a regional approach that facilitates the implementation of our common agendas.

We have a good expertise in terms of engineering, consolidating, scaling up, financing and implementing development cooperation projects in different sectors, that contribute to regional integration and have an impact in terms of socio-economic improvement. BSEC is doing the same but has established a different model, for instance with the creation of a Trade and Development Bank.

This model of financing can also be an inspiration for the UfM, as I had the opportunity to convey to Mr. Pankin, President of the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank.

The Union for the Mediterranean, through its Secretariat, stands ready to work and support the efforts of BSEC in different sectors, namely by sharing our insights, methodologies, lessons learned or results of our activities and projects.

The sharing of these experiences can be a beneficial process for both organizations, and we should continue and deepen this interaction.

I would like to convey to the Greek authorities, that will be taking charge of the Chairmanship of BSEC, as well as my dear colleague Ambassador Christides – whom I will have the pleasure of hosting later this year in Barcelona for a coordination meeting (between international organizations) – the full availability and engagement of the UfM to strengthen the cooperation ties between our two organizations.

Congratulations to Bulgaria. Best wishes to Greece!

Thank you very much.