

BSEC GENDER EQUALITY PLAN STUDY

“BSEC has accomplished much in the past three decades since its establishment in 1992, as a unique and promising platform of multilateral economic cooperation, with the signing of the Istanbul Summit Declaration and the Bosphorus Statement by the Heads of State and Government of the countries in the region. Today, besides being the oldest Organization in this geostrategic region that connects three continents, it asserts itself as a prominent actor in promoting peace, stability and prosperity through economic cooperation, encouraging friendly and good-neighborly relations in the Black Sea area. As it begins its fourth decade of existence, it continues to serve as an important framework for cooperation in a wide range of domains to the benefit of its 13 Member States as well as to broadly collaborate with other regional and international organizations on various projects of common interest.

I would like to convey my gratitude to our Members States, our Related Bodies, as well as to our Observers and Sectoral Partners, and last but not least, to all the BSEC Staff Members who whole-heartedly contributed to the well-functioning and success of the Organization since its inception.(...)”, says Ambassador Lazăr Comănescu, BSEC PERMIS Secretary General in his introductory speech about the organization.

When it comes to gender equality, the subject of this plan study, this principle has been a core value of BSEC since its establishment more than three decades ago. By working on the BSEC Gender Equality Plan (GEP), BSEC has managed to promote gender equality both within BSEC constituency and in the context of the various BSEC structures, starting from the BSEC PERMIS. The study phase of the GEP has allowed to clearly understand the current atmosphere, which is summarized and explained under the paragraphs below. When it comes to the crucial notion of gender equality, the picture outlined by collected data looks very promising. However, for each and every international organization, there is always improvement to make. This is also the case for BSEC PERMIS employees but also BSEC project partners and stakeholders.

Therefore, the BSEC PERMIS GEP represents an essential tool, as it provides a framework, a number of specific data and measures to take when it comes to gender equality. By specifying BSEC practices, BSEC will be able to improve its understanding of gender issues, as a precondition for an organizational and cultural change, and to promote gender mainstreaming throughout projects and initiatives supported or implemented by the BSEC Organization.

The implementation of the Gender Equality Plan will keep BSEC engaged in the future with the gender equality principles and will give to BSEC the opportunity to strengthen the impact on gender related regional cooperation.

I. The overall context

The Founding Members of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation - the Republic of Albania, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Bulgaria, Georgia, the Hellenic Republic, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and Ukraine, have signed on 25 June 1992 in Istanbul the “Summit Declaration on Black Sea Economic Cooperation”, confirmed their adherence to the principles and objectives of cooperation stated therein as well as in the “Bosphorus Statement” of 25 June 1992, the “Bucharest Statement of the High Level Meeting of the BSEC Participating States” of 30 June 1995, and the “Moscow Declaration of the Heads of State or Government of the Participating States of the BSEC” of 25 October 1996, the Helsinki Final Act, the Paris Charter for a New Europe as well as the generally recognized principles and rules of international law.

II. Gender Equality Principle in the BSEC Charter

In the **CHARTER OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION**, it has been regulated that:

The founding members of BSEC, reaffirmed their adherence to the principles of the *United Nations Charter*.

UN support for the rights of women and consequently the respect of gender equality principles, began with the UN's founding Charter, charter that is fully adhered and respected by BSEC.

Among the purposes of the UN declared in Article 1 of its Charter is “To achieve international co-operation in promoting and encouraging respect for **human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.**”

Furthermore, BSEC Member States in the Charter, share and approve the common vision of their regional cooperation as a part of the integration process in Europe, based on *human rights and fundamental freedoms, prosperity through economic liberty, social justice, and equal security and stability* which is open for interaction with other countries, regional initiatives and international organizations and financial institutions.

Consequently, with the **CHARTER OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION**, which consists in a fundamental legal document, BSEC precises, agrees and emphasizes the gender equality principle through the UN Charter and through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The principle of Gender Equality was made part of international human rights law by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948. That milestone document in the history of human rights recognized that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” and that “everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, ... birth or other status.”

Under Article 16 of the CHARTER OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION, it has been stated that:

“The staff of the BSEC PERMIS shall perform their duties as international officials with due regard to the principles and objectives of the BSEC. Their conduct shall always conform to the principles of integrity and impartiality required for their work.”

Therefore, in conformity with the Charter, the BSEC PERMIS staff shall respect the principles adopted by the Organization, international laws, UN rules and human rights, consequently gender equality principle.

III. Gender Equality Principle in the REGULATIONS FOR THE STAFF

These regulations include the rules, principles and procedures governing the selection of personnel, their recruitment and the efficient operation of the Permanent International Secretariat of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, in attainment of the objectives set forth in the Charter of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.

Under the “**Classification of posts**” it has been stated that:

The posts in the PERMIS shall be classified in Category D representing Directorial Staff, Category P representing Professional Staff and Category S representing Supportive Staff.

1. The Secretary General shall be the chief administrative officer of the PERMIS.
2. Subject to the Council's approval, the Secretary General shall make appropriate provision for the classification of posts and staff according to the nature of the duties and responsibilities required.

The posts in the PERMIS shall be classified in accordance with the following categories:

Category D	Directorial staff: Secretary General, First Deputy Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General;
Category P	Professional staff: Project Coordinator, Legal Advisor, Executive Manager as well as other similar expert personnel;
Category S	Supportive staff: Accountant, Archivist/Officer in Charge of Documentation, Secretary/Typist, Secretary/Receptionist, Superintendent, Driver/Messenger, Office-Cleaner, etc.

The gender equality principle is fully respected in the process of appointments of all category BSEC PERMIS staff members. In this process both for female and male candidates, education, experience, competence and personal qualities of the individual staff members are taken into consideration.

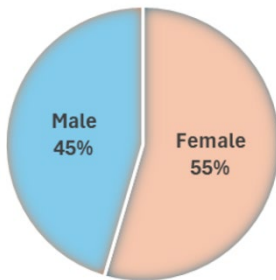
All the appointed BSEC PERMIS staff members benefit from the same rights. (ex: salary, education grant, privilege.). Under each category directorial, professional and supportive, the principle of gender equality is respected. The balance of female and male employees, their salaries and hiring processes are completely equal, balanced and fair.

In conformity with the objectives of the BSEC and for the efficient and effective fulfillment of the functions of the PERMIS, the Secretary General shall assign in accordance with the Job Descriptions the appropriate division of work among the staff members. In this assignment again education, experience, competence and other relevant personal qualities of the individual staff member are the determining factors.

IV. Gender issues related to the BSEC staff

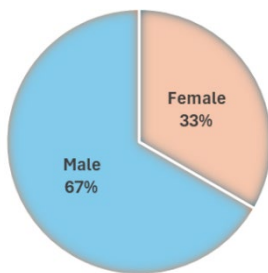
Gender-disaggregated data were collected and analyzed to draw a preliminary picture of the matter on gender equality related to BSEC PERMIS staff.

BSEC Staff - Distribution by Gender



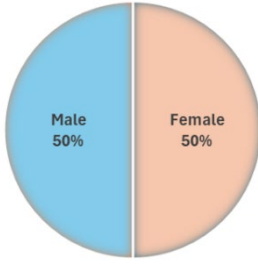
	Female	Male	Total
All Staff	12	10	22
%	55%	45%	100%

BSEC Staff - Gender Distribution by Category – Directorial



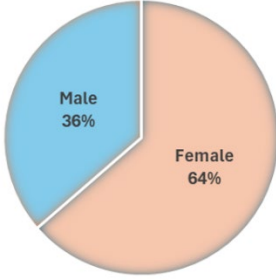
	Female	Male	Total
Directorial	1	2	3
All Staff	12	10	22
%	33.3%	66.7%	100.0%

BSEC Staff - Gender Distribution by Category – Professional



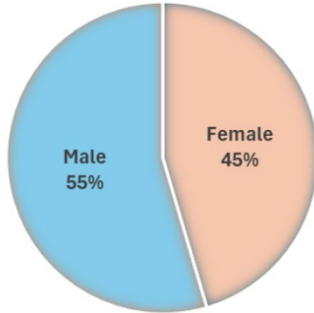
	Female	Male	Total
Professional	4	4	8
All Staff	12	10	22
%	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

BSEC Staff - Gender Distribution by Category – Supportive



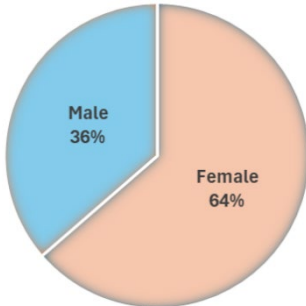
	Female	Male	Total
Supportive	7	4	11
All Staff	12	10	22
%	63.6%	36.4%	100.0%

BSEC Staff - Gender Distribution by Contract Type - Appointment



	Female	Male	Total
Appointment	5	6	11
All Staff	12	10	22
%	45.5%	54.5%	100.0%

BSEC Staff - Gender Distribution by Contract Type - Contractual



	Female	Male	Total
Contractual	7	4	11
All Staff	12	10	22
%	63.6%	36.4%	100.0%

In terms of directorial, professional and supportive staff members, the baseline situation looks positive and the balances between the numbers of female and male employees are established. Under each contract type and category, between female and male employees, the BSEC staff female and male employee numbers are equivalent and well balanced. Therefore, we can conclude that the gender equality principle is fully respected under the roof of BSEC international organization.



Ambassador Lazăr COMĂNESCU
Secretary General