



ICBSS Report for the 'BSEC Month of Culture 2017'

1. Concept

On the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the BSEC Organisation, the ICBSS introduced a new initiative, the '**BSEC Month of Culture**', a month long programme of cultural highlights from the 12 BSEC Member States.

Being aware of the rich, diverse cultural heritage of the BSEC region, the ICBSS launched the "BSEC Month of Culture", from 1st to 30th June 2017, with the aim to promote the cultural identity of the region and enhance its visibility to the wider public.

Our aspiration is to establish the '**BSEC Month of Culture**' as an annual event that will include more cultural activities each year.

2. Implementation of the BSEC Month of Culture 2017

a) Methodology

All information material used during the event was gathered through research, as well as it was provided by the BSEC Member States.

More specifically, prior to the event, the ICBSS did an extensive research on the 12 unique BSEC cultures; research focused on literature, music, cinema, gastronomy, monuments and archaeological sites. It has been a challenge to limit the vast amount of information of each country down to a manageable amount to be used during the event.

Additionally, the ICBSS contacted, through BSEC PERMIS, the respective cultural institutions of the BSEC Member States, kindly requesting for their contribution to the event.

In this regard, the ICBSS would like to extend its appreciation to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Greece and Turkey for their valuable contribution to the Month of Culture, with electronic material from their cultural history.

b) Activities

The '**BSEC Month of Culture**' was successfully launched in June 1, and ran until June 30, 2017.

Throughout the whole month, the ICBSS posted on its **website** (www.icbss.org), **facebook** (@icbss.org) and **twitter** (@icbss_dikemep), trivia about literature, cinema, music, gastronomy and monuments of the 12 BSEC Member States.

Posts were uploaded on a daily basis, in various forms, i.e. short texts, online quizzes, short video clips. In addition, in order to disseminate information as widely as possible, the ICBSS included two dedicated hashtags #BSEC25, #CultureBSEC, alongside the hashtag of each country and thematic.

For example, a facebook post about Romanian gastronomy:

- Have you ever tried Romanian *covrigi*?
Covrigi are Romanian baked goods sold around in cities. They are oven-baked bread rolls that have a consistency somewhere between a bagel and hot pretzel. They are sold plain or sprinkled with sesame or poppy seeds. [#BSEC25](#) [#CultureBSEC](#) [#Gastronomy](#) [#Romania](#)
 [Available on https://www.facebook.com/pg/icbss.org/posts/?ref=page_internal]

In total, **67 posts** were uploaded. More specifically:

- **5 posts** for each country;
- **12 posts** of each category (literature, music, cinema, monuments and gastronomy);
- **3 quizzes** created by ICBSS, through the platform of PlayBuzz (“How well do you know the unique cultures of the BSEC countries?”, “Can you name the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the BSEC countries?”, “Can you name the great personalities of the BSEC Countries?”);
- **4 dedicated posts** to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey with videos and photos, a courtesy of the four countries’ cultural institutions.

An analytical programme with all uploaded posts, by date, is provided in the following table:

Date	Post
6/30/2017	ICBSS - QUIZZ Can you name the great personalities of the BSEC Countries?
6/29/2017	Taras Hryhorovych Shevchenko
6/29/2017	Ankara Film Festival
6/29/2017	Pljeskavica
6/28/2017	Kizhi Pogost
6/28/2017	Wooden Churches of Maramures
6/28/2017	Ion Druta
6/27/2017	Mikis Theodorakis
6/27/2017	Historical Monuments of Mtskheta
6/27/2017	Bistritsa Babi
6/26/2017	Shekerbura
6/26/2017	Monasteries of Haghpat and Sanahin
6/26/2017	Flija
6/22/2017	Discover Turkey!
6/22/2017	Discover Azerbaijan!
6/21/2017	ICBSS - QUIZZ Can you name the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the BSEC countries?
6/20/2017	Milestii Mici Winery

6/20/2017	Fassolada
6/20/2017	Mihai Eminescu
6/20/2017	Cine DOC Tbilisi
6/19/2017	Pirozhki
6/19/2017	Yordan Yovkov
6/19/2017	Stari Ras and Sopocani
6/19/2017	Rustam Ibragimbekov
6/16/2017	Saz
6/16/2017	Lavash
6/16/2017	Odessa International Film Festival
6/16/2017	Albanian Folk Polyphonic music
6/15/2017	Discover Georgia!
6/14/2017	Discover Armenia!
6/14/2017	ICBSS - QUIZZ How well do you know the unique cultures of the BSEC countries?
6/13/2017	Borscht
6/13/2017	Goreme valley and Cappadocia
6/13/2017	Guca Trumpet Festival
6/13/2017	Boris Pasternak
6/12/2017	Covrigi
6/12/2017	CRONOGRAF
6/12/2017	Delphi
6/12/2017	Polyphonic singing of Georgia
6/9/2017	International Film Festival of Sofia
6/9/2017	Uzeyir Hajibeyov
6/9/2017	Raffi
6/9/2017	Butrint
6/8/2017	Wooden Tserkvas
6/8/2017	Kunefe
6/8/2017	Ivo Andric
6/8/2017	Balalaika
6/7/2017	Christi Puiu
6/7/2017	National Academic Ensemble of Folk Dance Joc
6/7/2017	Giorgos Seferis
6/7/2017	Khinkali
6/6/2017	Tarator
6/6/2017	Gobustan Rock Art
6/6/2017	Duduk Festival
6/6/2017	The Great Warrior Skanderberg
6/2/2017	Moldovan Placinta
6/2/2017	Yorgos Lanthimos
6/2/2017	Doina
6/2/2017	Tbilisi International Festival of Literature

6/2/2017	Kinotavr
6/2/2017	Ancient City of Nessebar
6/1/2017	Orhan Pamuk
6/1/2017	Nizami Genjevi
6/1/2017	Emir Kusturica
6/1/2017	"Golden Apricot" Yerevan International Film Festival
6/1/2017	Bandura
6/1/2017	Ismail Kadare

3. Dissemination and Impact

a) **Announcement of the Event**

A **pre-press release** was sent out by the ICBSS, announcing the launch of the Month of Culture. The press release alone resulted in an **increase of page visits and facebook page likes**, in anticipation of the event. The announcement of the BSEC Month of Culture featured a small quiz:

Do you know the answers to these questions?

- *Who wrote *The General of the Dead Army*?*
- *How apricots and films are related?*
- *After whom did *The National Museum of Azerbaijani Literature* take its name?*
- *What do you know about the Ancient City of Nessebar?*
- *Which two films from Russia and Georgia competed for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language in 2015?*
- *Where is the “navel of the world”?*
- *What is happening in Chisinau between 25th and 30th of May?*
- *Can you name a World Heritage site in Romania?*
- *Who wrote *Istanbul and My name is Red*, winning a Nobel Prize?*
- *In which way *Underground* there was a Palm d’or?*
- *How many strings a bandura has?*

Interested in learning more about the fascinating culture of the BSEC Member States?

**Join the BSEC Month of Culture, organised by the ICBSS from 1-30 June 2017
and learn about the remarkable cultural heritage of the BSEC region.**

Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) and visit our [Website!](#)

b) **Dissemination Results**

The 'BSEC Month of Culture' had a great impact; evidently more through social media than the website.

Indicatively, during the **first half** of its launch, statistics showed **measurable increase of peoples' engagement** to the uploaded facebook posts. For example, during the first week, facebook posts' weekly reach achieved **an increase of 527%, namely approx. 2300 people more**, than in an average week, clicked to read the posts on facebook.

In total, **facebook posts reached a total of 32.241 users** while reactions to posts (namely likes, comments, shares) were 266. In particular, the ICBSS would like to extend its appreciation to the **Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB)** for sharing all posts to its facebook page for greater dissemination.

In addition, **twitter posts reached 8.911 users**; 40 retweets, 14 likes and 31 total URL links.

Moreover, statistics show that several posts had bigger impact than others. Particularly, short videos tend to attract more users.

More specifically, the **facebook** post with the greatest impact was the short video clip of Armenia, entitled "Discover Armenia" that reached 1900 users; followed by the posts on Placinta (1820 users), on Yorgos Lanthimos (1571 users), on Doina, (1305 users), on the Tbilisi International Literature Festival (1117 users), on Orhan Pamuk (1182 users) and Nizami Genjevi (1046 users).

On the other hand, the post with the greatest impact on **twitter** was the *ICBSS Quiz: How well do you know the unique cultures of the BSEC countries*, which reached 548 users; followed by the posts on Rustam Ibragimbekov (341 users), ICBSS Quiz: Can you name the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the BSEC countries (303 users), on Giorgos Seferis (301 users) and on Tarator (300 users).

In particular, uploaded **quizzes** had the following impact:

- How well do you know the unique cultures of the BSEC countries? reached 260 facebook users and 548 on twitter;
- Can you name the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the BSEC countries? reached 109 facebook users and 303 on twitter;
- Can you name the great personalities of the BSEC Countries? reached 366 facebook users and 36 on twitter.

With regards to the **dedicated posts**, courtesy of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey:

- Discover Armenia reached 1900 users on Facebook and 120 on Twitter
- Discover Azerbaijan reached 307 users on Facebook and 131 on Twitter
- Discover Georgia reached 430 users on Facebook and 294 on Twitter
- Discover Turkey reached 174 users on Facebook and 110 on Twitter.

4. Preparations for the 'BSEC Month of Culture 2018'

Following on the successful impact of the first edition of the 'BSEC Month of Culture', the ICBSS will launch the **second edition of the BSEC Month of Culture, in 2018!**

Taking into consideration the plethora of information on the cultural heritage of the BSEC countries, the ICBSS aims to include **more information and additional activities** in the 2nd edition, alongside the electronic posts. In particular, the ICBSS is preparing the launch of a **photo contest**, with a small prize (tbd), including also the possibility of a **photography exhibition**.

The exact dates of the event and photo contest are to be announced in due course.

Within this framework, in view of the preparations of the BSEC Month of Culture 2018, the ICBSS would like **to invite the BSEC Member States to get actively involved in the preparation process**, by suggesting activities, sending information material and/or offering any other suggestion for the second edition of the Cultural Month.

For more information, please contact Ms. Georgia Chantzi at gchantzi@icbss.org or at +30 210 32 42 321.

5. Conclusion

All posts uploaded during the BSEC Month of Culture 2017 are accessible through ICBSS website and social media accounts:

- ✓ Website: www.icbss.org
- ✓ Facebook: [@icbss.org](https://www.facebook.com/icbss.org)
- ✓ Twitter: [@icbss_dikemep](https://twitter.com/icbss_dikemep)

Join this remarkable cultural journey, today!