



***Tourism development along the Silk Road:  
Promoting Economic and Intercultural linkages***

SUBJECT	<p>Since ancient times, the Silk Road served as a bridge between East and West, uniting three continents and different cultures along its route. Nowadays, the historic Silk Road revives again as an up-and-coming tourist destination, engaging numerous different cities, with rich natural and cultural heritage.</p> <p>The continuously evolving sector of tourism offers an excellent <b>opportunity</b> for <b>social development</b> and <b>economic growth</b> in the wider region, which should be further explored in order to reach its full potential in a sustainable manner.</p> <p>To this end, under the auspices of UNWTO, 33 countries in Asia, Africa and Europe have come together in a joint initiative the <b><i>UNWTO Silk Road Programme</i></b> that aims to maximize the benefits of tourism development for local Silk Road communities, while stimulating investment and promoting the conservation of the route's natural and cultural heritage.</p> <p>The 33 Member States currently participate in the UNWTO Silk Road Programme are: <b>Albania*</b>, <b>Armenia**</b>, <b>Azerbaijan*</b>, Bangladesh, <b>Bulgaria*</b>, China, Croatia, DPR Korea, Rep. Korea, Egypt, <b>Georgia*</b>, <b>Greece**</b>, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Italy, Japan, <b>Kazakhstan**</b>, <b>Kyrgyzstan**</b>, Mongolia, Pakistan, <b>Romania*</b>, <b>Russia**</b>, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Syria, Tajikistan, <b>Turkey*</b>, Turkmenistan, <b>Ukraine*</b> and Uzbekistan (as of July 2015).</p> <p>Within this framework, and acknowledging the need for improving the current business environment in the wider Black Sea region, <b>the ICBSS</b>, in cooperation with the <b>Greek-Eurasian Business Council</b>, are organising a Round Table Discussion on <b>linkages for tourism development along the Silk Road</b>.</p> <p>The Discussion aims to examine the competitive advantage of the targeted tourism market in attracting investments and enhancing local business communities, in relation to environmental concerns and the protection of cultural heritage.</p> <p><i>(*) BSEC countries – covered by ICBSS activities</i>  <i>(**) EEC countries – covered by GEBC</i></p>
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ORGANISERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS)</b> Founded in 1998 as a non-profit organisation, the ICBSS is an independent research and training institution and a related body of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). Through its various activities, the Centre promotes knowledge and fosters multilateral cooperation among the BSEC member states as well as with their international partners.</li><li>• <b>Greek-Eurasian Business Council (GEBC)</b> Established in September 2014 in Athens, the GEBC aims to support and enhance bilateral business relations between Greece and the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union, including private commercial enterprises, foreign trade agencies, investors, SMEs, organizations, individuals, as well as others with business interests in the aforementioned markets.</li></ul>
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