BSEMAN

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

FOUNDING AND OPERATION OF THE BLACK SEA AND EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN ACADEMIC NETWORK – BSEMAN

Thessaloniki, 26 May 2018

1. Preamble

1.1 Introductory statement

The Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean (BSEM) is the theatre of our history and the platform for our common future.

An oxymoron intensifies in our time: the scientific and technological breakthroughs create opportunities for a progressive collaboration among the people of the region; however, the global systemic crisis, regional socioeconomic and political disturbances, and any action against the very basics of the humanitarian acquis, as well as any kind of assaults on freedom of expression hinder such collaboration in the BSEM. These circumstances create a challenge and at the same time a historical responsibility for the academic community of the BSEM to counteract.

We, the undersigned parties of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), respond to our obligation to ***utilize the social / scientific significance of our institutions, to strengthen our cooperation and to intensify our joint educational and research activity by establishing the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean Academic Network (BSEMAN) in serving a peaceful, collaborative, creative, socially and environmentally sustainable future in the region and in counteracting any discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, age, physical or mental ability and marital status***.

1.2 Scope and content of the present MoU

Following a respective preparatory period, in the "Workshop on the Establishment of a Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean Academic Network" that was hosted in Rostov on Don on the 7th October 2017, participators appointed a "task force" consisting of academicians from the whole region to prepare proposals on the content of our initiative and to organize the Founding Conference on the 26th of May 2018 in Thessaloniki.

The present document is the record of the founding act and constitutes a multilateral agreement of the participating institutions, serving as the statute of the established Network. Specifically, it determines the recognized aims and the ways how to achieve them, the seats and the website, the details respective membership and finally the operation of BSEMAN.

2. Aims and ways of achievement

2.1 Aims and basic activities

The realization of the above defined strategic goal of our Network succeeds through the pursuit of the following aims:

i. develop and realize common research projects in the whole range of scientific disciplines, focused on global and regional issues such as water supply, energy, environment, Green Economy and Blue Growth, security and safety issues, countering

the legalization of criminal profits as well as the financing of vicious, inhuman activities, promoting human dignity, social equity and liberty of expression etc.;

ii. sustain a network of combining the libraries and data resources of the participating institutions, as well as new, supranational, big databases;

iii. issue periodicals and organize scientific workshops and conferences, as well as events that will bring together academicians, cultural and business communities of the BSEM;

iv. develop the educational cooperation in all tiers of higher education, also in vocational training and lifelong learning, utilizing the existing exchange schemes and distanced learning possibilities;

v. accomplish social interventions as well as jointly undertaking activities in cultural issues; Innovation, start-ups and entrepreneurial development and

vi. realize initiatives that bring together the youth in the region, culturally, academically and also vocationally.

2.2 Methods and means

BSEMAN does not have its own assets. Therefore, for the realization of its aims, the Network comes to the resources of its members. For this to be achieved, the participating institutions are committed to cooperate in good faith, in order to assure a fair distribution of responsibilities and efforts and to provide the necessary infrastructure, human resources, knowledge stock and experience for serving the commonly acknowledged aims.

The allocation of responsibilities and burdens between the participating institutions for the implementation of the actions and the initiatives is done by the Coordinating Committee of BSEMAN (see section 5.2), either based on the annual program of the Network, or for the realization of any unplanned, extra activity.

The Coordinating Committee is also responsible for seeking and deciding in using financial or in-kind contribution from other public, national, international and Community sources in order to support projects of the Network.

Beside to the efficient and balanced utilization of the tangible and intangible resources of the members of BSEMAN, especially important for the strategic goal we set is the communication strategy. This may consist in using all the thinkable means for communication and publication, but the central tool for this reason is the website of our Network in the domain name www.bseman.net. The Website Editorial Committee is responsible for the administration of the webpage (see in section 5.4).

3. Seat(s)

Each member institution has to appoint a contact person and communication details – email, address, phone number – that will be announced in the website of the Network. The General Assembly of BSEMAN decides for the location of the Secretariat (see in section 5.3) and its contact details will be also announced on the website. All the determined locations of the member institutions and of the Secretariat will be acknowledged as seats of the Network.

4. Membership

4.1 Founding members

The academic institutions listed in alphabetic order in the appendix have signed the present MoU in the frame of the Founding Conference of BSEMAN.

They all are full members of BSEMAN (see below in section 4.2) and they have the same obligations and rights with any full member that may sign the present MoU at a later stage.

4.2 Full, associate, assisting or honorary members

BSEMAN is formed by academic institutions willing to pursue the Network's strategic goal and aims, coming from the region of BSEM and/or from other regions of the world provided they wish to develop and strengthen international cooperation for the advancement of culture, science, education and research in the region of BSEM.

Full member of BSEMAN can be any university in a country from BSEM, officially accredited by the state where it has its basic seat, that provides all the degrees of higher academic education and is engaged in basic and applied research. Full members have to officially adhere to the vision and aims of BSEMAN as stated in section 1. They have all the obligations and rights that result from the present MoU.

Associate member of BSEMAN can be any university in the rest of the world that wish to develop and strengthen international cooperation in BSEM, officially accredited by the state where it has its basic seat, that provides all the degrees of higher academic education and is engaged in basic and applied research. Associate members have to officially adhere to the vision and aims of BSEMAN as stated in section 1. They have all the obligations and rights that result from the present MoU except the right to vote in the General Assembly and the right to host the Secretariat of BSEMAN.

Assisting member of BSEMAN can be any public or private entity willing to pursue the Network's strategic goal and aims, coming from the region of BSEM and/or from other regions of the world provided it wishes to develop and strengthen international cooperation in BSEM – e.g. research institutions, chambers, civil society organizations etc. Assisting members have to officially adhere to the vision and aims of BSEMAN as stated in section 1. They can participate in the General Assembly and have the right to speech, yet not the right to vote. They can also form together with other members of BSEMAN a Working Group, but they cannot participate in any other administrative body.

Honorary member of BSEMAN can be any legal or natural person that has contributed significantly to the strategic goal of our Network. Honorary members have to officially adhere to the vision and aims of BSEMAN as stated in section 1. They can participate in the General Assembly and have the right to speech, yet not the right to vote. They do not participate in any of the administrative bodies.

4.3 Membership acceptance, cancelling and designation

Full, associate and assisting membership acceptance requires that the member-to-be have to fulfil the above criteria and to declare its willingness to pursue the Network's strategic goal and aims. Membership acceptance succeeds by an enhanced majority (3/4) decision of the General Assembly, following a well justified and documented, unanimous suggestion of the Coordinating Committee. Objections of any kind have to be sufficiently justified and documented and should be taken seriously into consideration, according to the spirit and the essence of our networking.

Honorary membership requires a well justified and documented proposal submitted to the General Assembly by a group of five (at least) full and/or associate members and succeeds by an unanimous decision of the General Assembly.

Any kind of membership can be cancelled following a well justified and documented censure submitted in the General Assembly by a full or associate member that will be unanimously accepted by the General Assembly.

Any full, associate, assisting or honorary member has the right to designate and to cancel its membership to BSEMAN, by submitting a formal request to the Secretariat.

5. Administrative formation and operation of the network

5.1 General Assembly (GA)

The ***General Assembly*** is the supreme administrative body of BSEMAN. It consists of the full members – each full member has one vote – the associate, the assisting and the honorary members (where the last three categories have only the right to speech).

The convention of the GA, which takes place annually on a regular basis as well as irregularly, whenever full-members from at least three BSEM countries request for, is the starting point of the operation of BSEMAN.

The agenda of any regular GA shall include as a minimum the following items:

i. reporting of the outgoing Coordinating Committee and appointing the new one;
ii. conducting the annual program based on the action plan and appointing any needed working groups;
iii. decision for the hosting of the Secretariat;
iv. reporting of the outgoing Website Editorial Committee and appointing the new one;
v. reporting of the Working Groups related to their activities and any relevant issue;
vi. acceptance of new members and approval of the withdrawal of existing ones.

Provided the quorum is satisfied – physical or e-presence of representatives of at least half of the Network's full members – the GA first appoints the chairman and the secretary and second asks the participants to update the agenda, if needed, besides to the above mentioned (in case there is a regular GA) or to those that have been determined in the relevant request (in case there is an irregular GA). Once the possibility of unanimity has been exhausted, all decisions of the GA are being taken by an enhanced majority (3/4 of those that have a right to vote).

5.2 Coordinating Committee (CC)

The ***Coordinating Committee*** is the administrative body that coordinates the realization of the annual program of BSEMAN, as well as of any extraordinary activity. It has also the right to appoint more working groups.

The CC has an annual mandate – it is annually appointed by the regular General Assembly and consists of one delegate representing the universities from each BSEM country, provided there are full members from the specific country. A major obligation of the CC is to organize the next regular GA, before the end of its mandate, in which it also has to report on the events of the previous year and prepare an action plan for the following year.

The meetings of the CC can be organized either in physical or in e-presence format. All decisions of the CC are being taken by an enhanced majority (3/4).

5.3 Secretariat

The ***Secretariat*** is the administrative body that is responsible for the communication of the Network, sustaining the records of incoming and outgoing correspondence, as well as for the circulation of the necessary information among the members.

The GA decides on an annual basis which full member will host the Secretariat. The operation and the staffing of the Secretariat is a responsibility of the hosting member Institution.

5.4 Website Editorial Committee (WEC)

The ***Website Editorial Committee*** is the administrative body that is responsible for the management of the webpage of BSEMAN. It is annually appointed by the GA.

The WEC is also responsible for deciding where the webpage of the Network will be hosted. For a start, the webpage of BSEMAN will be hosted in the server of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

5.5 Working Group(s)

The ***Working Groups*** are voluntary administrative bodies that may be set to serve the realization of aspects of the annual program and any unplanned, extra activity. They may be appointed by the GA and/or by the CC.

6. Epilogue

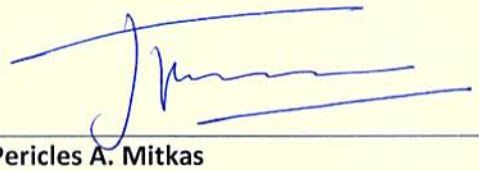
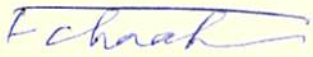
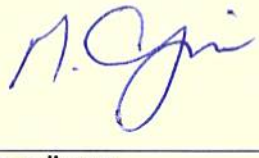
BSEMAN is being established for an indefinite duration. The dissolution of BSEMAN has to be approved by the GA with the affirmative vote of at least three-quarters (3/4) of the full members.

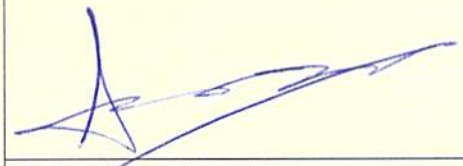
After two years, an item will be included in the agenda of the third regular GA referring to the possibility of transforming the present status of BSEMAN into an autonomous legal person. The members of the GA will evaluate the experiences and the results of the BSEMAN's activity, as well as the necessities of, and developments in, the region and will decide accordingly.

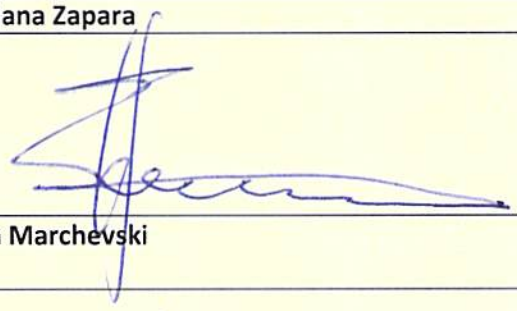
Thessaloniki, 26 May 2018.

The Founding Members:

Institution	**Representative (Name, Function and Signature)**
Al-Quds Open University	
	Imad Hodali
Al-Quds University	
	Hanna Abdel Nour

Institution	Representative (Name, Function and Signature)
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki-AUTh	 Pericles A. Mitkas
AZM University - Tripoli	 Farid Chaaban
Birzeit University	 Abdullatif Abu Hijleh
European University of Cyprus	 Pieris Chourides
French University in Armenia	 Jean-Marc Lavest (Rector)
Izmir University of Economics	 Can Mugan
Izmir Institute of Technology	 Mustafa GÜDEN

Institution	Representative (Name, Function and Signature)
Kuban State University Krasnodar	 Temyr Khagurov
Kyiv National Economic University - Vadym Hetman	 Viktor Chuzhykov
Open University of Cyprus	 Agis M. Papadopoulos
Poltava National Technical Yuri Kondratyuk University	 Bogdan Korobko
Rudny Industrial Institute	 Larissa Bozhko
Russian Armenian (Slavonic) University	 Irina Petrosyan
Samara State University of Economics	 Svetlana Asmarina

Institution	Representative (Name, Function and Signature)
Sumy National Agrarian University	Svitlana Zapara
Tsenov Academy of Economics	 Ivan Marchevski
University of Balamand	Antoine Melki
University of National and World Economy-UNWE	Paskal Zhelev
University of Nicosia	Phillipos Pouyiotas
University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski"	Yulia Dzhabarova
NATIONAL & KAPODISTRIAN UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS	Nikolaos Mylonas

Institution	Representative (Name, Function and Signature)
UNIVERSITY OF HRADEC KRÁLOVÉ CZECH REPUBLIC	LEONA STAŠOVÁ
ROSTOV STATE UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS	Abekov Adam