



ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

**Permanent International Secretariat**

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**REPORT OF THE  
MEETING OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP  
ON AGRICULTURE AND AGRO-INDUSTRY**

**BSEC Headquarters, 28 March 2014**

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Agriculture and Agro-Industry was held at the BSEC Headquarters on 28 March 2014.

2. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the following BSEC Member States:

Republic of Albania  
Republic of Armenia  
Republic of Bulgaria  
Georgia  
Hellenic Republic  
Russian Federation  
Republic of Turkey  
Ukraine

3. The following BSEC Observers also participated in the Meeting:

Arab Republic of Egypt  
European Commission

4. The following Guest attended the Meeting:

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

The List of Participants of the Meeting is attached as **Annex I**.

5. The Meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Branimir RADEV, Minister Plenipotentiary, Coordinator of the Bulgarian Chairmanship of the Organization of BSEC, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, and Mr. Artem TSINAMDZGVRISHVILI, Deputy Director, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture of the Russian Federation.

6. The Draft Agenda of the Meeting was discussed and adopted. The Agenda, as adopted, is attached as **Annex II**.

**STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COUNCIL RELATED TO AGRICULTURE AND AGRO-INDUSTRY AND FOLLOW-UP TO THE JOINT DECLARATIONS OF THE MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES**

7. The Republic of Bulgaria, as the BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office from 1 January to 30 June 2014, presented its priorities in the field of Agriculture and Agro-Industry, focusing on the exchange of good practices and experience between agricultural research and scientific institutes of the BSEC Member States, closer interaction among the national food safety control agencies and cooperation on the field of fisheries and aquaculture.

8. The Working Group took note of the information provided by the BSEC PERMIS, concerning recent activities in the field of Agriculture and Agro-Industry.

9. The Working Group exchanged views on the modalities of cooperation in the field of Agriculture and Agro-Industry and the ways and means of increasing the efficiency of the Working Group, including by:

- ensuring the holding of regular meetings, with the participation of experts from the relevant Authorities of the BSEC Member States;
- proceeding with the implementation of the Two-Year Action Plan, prepared by the Russian Federation, in its capacity as Country-Coordinator and approved during the last Meeting of the Working Group (Istanbul, 24-25 April 2013);
- enhancing the activity of the Working Group with concrete proposals for joint initiatives or projects, taking also into account the experience of the BSEC Member States in the field of Agriculture and Agro-Industry and the existing cooperation with international and regional organizations in the wider Black Sea area;
- examining the possibility of recommending the establishment of subsidiary organs reporting to the Working Group on Agriculture and Agro-Industry, in order to promote cooperation in specific areas, as the case may be, which are of particular importance to the Member States (e.g. Fisheries and aquaculture).

10. The Russian Federation proposed that the Member States provide a list of the agricultural products important for their imports and exports, to be considered at the next meeting of the Working Group.

11. The Working Group invited the Member States, who have not yet done so, to update the list of their respective national contact persons in the field of Agriculture and Agro-Industry.

12. A provisional list of national contact persons, prepared by the BSEC PERMIS, based on the information received from Member States and the lists of participants at previous Meetings of the Working Group is attached as **Annex III**.

## **DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE WORKING GROUP ON AGRICULTURE AND AGRO-INDUSTRY**

13. The Working Group exchanged views on the content of its new Terms of Reference and agreed to invite the Member States to provide their relevant contributions **by 30 May 2014**, in order to allow the Russian Federation, as the Country-Coordinator, and the BSEC PERMIS, to prepare a draft of the document, to be considered at the next Meeting of the Working Group.

14. The current Terms of Reference of the Working Group, approved by the Second Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Istanbul, 17 June 1993), are attached, for reference, as **Annex IV**.

15. The Declaration of the Meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture (Moscow, 7 October 2011), the BSEC Economic Agenda Towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership, approved by the BSEC Council (Belgrade, 11 June 2012) and endorsed by the BSEC Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the BSEC Member States (Istanbul, 26 June 2012), as well as the Two-Year Action Plan of the Working Group are equally attached, for reference, as **Annex V**.

## **THE “WAY FORWARD FOR AN ACTION PLAN ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE “ECONOMIC AGENDA TOWARDS AN ENHANCED BSEC PARTNERSHIP”**

16. The Working Group exchanged views on the practical follow-up to be given to the implementation of the priorities in the field of Agriculture and Agro-Industry approved at its last meeting (Istanbul, 24-25 April 2013), namely:

- Improving sustainable rural productivity and enhancing the international competitiveness of the Member States in food and agricultural products, in particular through: facilitating the access to new technologies and know-how, scaling up managerial innovations and harmonization and adoption of quality standards for products.
- Promoting exchange of information, experience and best practices among the competent authorities, national reference laboratories, agrarian research and education institutions and the private sector enterprises in the fields of agriculture, agro-industry and food safety in the Member States.
- Promoting regional cooperation for the sustainable management of fishery resources.

17. Furthermore, the Working Group took note of the relevant proposals of the Republic of Bulgaria and agreed to take them into consideration at its future discussions on the issue. The said proposals are attached as **Annex VI**.

18. The Working Group invited the interested Member States to provide their input on the road map for the implementation of the three above-mentioned priorities and eventual project proposals by **30 May 2014**, making use of the relevant template elaborated by the BSEC PERMIS. The Template is attached as **Annex VII**. The project proposals will be considered at the next Meeting of the Working Group.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BSEC PUBLIC COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

19. The Working Group decided on the key messages, referring to main activities in the field of Agriculture and Agro-Industry, to be communicated within the framework of the BSEC Public Communication Strategy:

- the implementation of the Two-Year Action Plan of the Working Group;
- the elaboration of the new Terms of Reference of the Working Group; and
- the scheduling of concrete activities and the elaboration of project proposals under the three priorities, mentioned in para. 16 of the Report.

### **PROSPECTS OF THE BLACK SEA REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF FISHERIES**

20. The Working Group took note of the information provided by the Delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Delegation of the Russian Federation, concerning recent developments in the field of fisheries and aquaculture in their respective countries.

21. The Working Group took also note of the information provided by the BSEC PERMIS on this item.

22. The representative of the European Commission provided information on the activities of the European Union in the field of fisheries and aquaculture, in particular in the framework of the EU's "Integrated Maritime Policy" for the Black Sea and referred, especially, to the positive outcomes of the Joint General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean-Black Sea Commission Workshop on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing in the Black Sea (Istanbul, 25-27 February 2013).

23. The Working Group stressed the importance of enhancing regional cooperation in the field of fisheries and aquaculture, taking into account the valuable experience of coastal countries and the relevant activity of other regional and international organizations, including the European Union.

### **COOPERATION AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD OF FOOD SAFETY AMONG CENTRAL COMPETENT AUTHORITIES AND NATIONAL REFERENCE LABORATORIES OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES**

24. The Working Group took note of the information provided by the Delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Delegation of the Republic of Turkey and the Delegation of the Russian Federation, concerning recent developments in the field of food safety in their respective countries.

25. The Working Group took also note of the information provided by the BSEC PERMIS on this item and, in view of its importance, decided to continue the discussions on the issue at its next meeting.

### **CONSULTATION ON ELABORATION OF HARMONIZING THE LABELING STANDARDS FOR FOOD PRODUCTS AS AN IMPORTANT PART OF FOOD QUALITY AND SAFETY**

26. The Working Group took note of the information provided by the Delegation of the Republic of Turkey, concerning recent developments in this field and in view of the importance of the elaboration of the labeling standards for food products on food quality and safety, decided to continue discussions on the issue at its next meeting.

## **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

27. The Republic of Bulgaria provided information on the holding of Roundtable “Agriculture in the Black Sea Region. Common Solutions to Similar Problems” (Sofia, 25 April 2014) and invited the Member States to participate in it. The Republic of Bulgaria will provide all relevant information on the Roundtable in due time.

28. The BSEC PERMIS informed the participants of the readiness of the Arab Republic of Egypt to provide training to experts from the BSEC Member States, through seminars and workshops to be organized in Egypt in 2015. Corresponding Note of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt is attached as **Annex VIII**.

29. The Working Group expressed its appreciation to the Arab Republic of Egypt, Observer State to BSEC, for its willingness to contribute to the BSEC activities.

30. The BSEC PERMIS referred to the activities of PABSEC in the field of Agriculture and Agro-Industry. The most recent relevant PABSEC Reports and Recommendations are attached, for reference, as **Annex IX**.

## **DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

31. The date and venue of the next Meeting of the Working Group on Agriculture and Agro-Industry will be communicated to the BSEC Member States through BSEC PERMIS.

## **ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

32. The Working Group adopted the present Report for its submission to the Committee of Senior Officials and the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs for their consideration.

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