



BS/WG/AG/R(2007)1

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

Sofia, 11-12 April 2007

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Agriculture and Agro-Industry was held in Sofia, the Republic of Bulgaria, on 11-12 April 2007.
2. The following BSEC Member States participated in the Meeting:
 - Republic of Armenia
 - Republic of Bulgaria
 - Hellenic Republic
 - Republic of Moldova
 - Romania
 - Russian Federation
 - Republic of Serbia
 - Republic of Turkey
 - Ukraine

The list of participants of the Meeting is attached as **Annex I**.

3. An opening statement was delivered by Dr. Svetla BATCHVAROVA, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Bulgaria.
4. The Meeting was chaired by Mrs. Nevena MILENCHEVA-BABEVA, State Expert, European Integration and International Relations Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Bulgaria.
5. The draft agenda of the Meeting was discussed and agreed upon. The agenda, as adopted, is attached as **Annex II**.

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS RELATED TO AGRICULTURE AND AGRO-INDUSTRY

6. The Working Group discussed the ways and means of implementation of the Decision of the 15th Meeting of the BSEC Council related to agriculture and agro-industry sectors, particularly in the direction of elaborating concrete projects of multilateral cooperation.

7. The Working Group emphasized the fact that the instruction of the Council was implemented by considering and endorsing two project applications.

8. The Working Group acknowledged in general terms the implementation of the Action Plan and the Working Programme in the field of agriculture for 2005-2007 as presented by the Republic of Bulgaria in its capacity of the Country-Coordinator.

CONSIDERATION OF PROJECT APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDING BY THE BSEC PROJECT DEVELOPMENT FUND

9. The Working Group considered the following project applications submitted to BSEC PERMIS for funding by the BSEC Project Development Fund:

“A Feasibility Study for Variable Rate Irrigation in the Black Sea region: Economical and Environmental Benefits” from the applicant organizations from Greece, Turkey and Bulgaria;

“Fatty liver incidence on mini dairy cow farms in the Republic of Serbia, Romania and the Republic of Moldova” from the applicant organizations from Serbia, Romania and Moldova.

10. The participants noted that the abovementioned project applications contain an assessment on the ways and means of the implementation of specific Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations of the Council. They also mentioned that the projects comprise clear economic elements with a likely possibility to attract public or private funding in the project implementation stage.

11. The Working Group recommended to the applicant organizations that they cooperate with BSEC PERMIS for any eventual improvements of the content of the project proposals.

12. The Working Group endorsed the two project applications and submitted them for final approval to the Committee of Senior Officials to be held in Belgrade on 17-18 April 2007.

13. The delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria stressed the importance of the project proposal on fatty liver incidence on mini dairy cow farms and expressed its interest in joining the project either at this stage or at the stage of its implementation, pending the consent of the applicant organizations.

COOPERATION OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES IN THE FIELD OF PHYTO-SANITATION

14. The participants exchanged views on the current state of affairs on phyto-sanitary control measures in the BSEC Member States and the efforts to improve this service.

15. The delegation of the Republic of Turkey suggested a potential cooperation project on development and application of advanced combating techniques for Sune-pest (*Eurygaster integriceps*) management.

16. The delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria suggested the exchange of information in the field of phyto-sanitation to be carried out on the web-site of the BSEC Organization. Taking into account the technical difficulties that may arise in the process of collecting and compiling the abovementioned information, which should be based on established standards, the participants decided to discuss this issue at a later stage.

17. The delegation of the Republic of Serbia informed the Working Group on the process of implementing the legislation in the field of phyto-sanitation, which is in line with the EU and WTO rules and regulations.

NOMINATION OF THE NEW COUNTRY-COORDINATOR OF THE WORKING GROUP

18. The Working Group took note of the decision of the Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials held in Istanbul on 26-27 February 2007, where it was agreed to propose to the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States (Belgrade, 19 April 2007) to appoint the Russian Federation as the Country-Coordinator of the Working Group on Agriculture and Agro-Industry as of 1 May 2007 for a period of two years.

19. The delegation of the Russian Federation suggested in general terms the specific topics to be discussed within the Working Group in the next two years, particularly, holding exhibition in the field of agriculture and agro-industry with the participation of enterprises from the BSEC Member States, as well as the continuation of the dialogue between public and private sectors with the participation of governmental institutions.

20. The Working Group invited the Member States to present their views and ideas to the next Country-Coordinator, so that they could be taken into account in the preparation of the two-year Action Plan in the field of Agriculture and Agro-Industry, to be drafted by the Russian Federation.

21. The Working Group also suggested that a Meeting be held between outgoing and upcoming Countries-Coordination with the aim of transferring the experience and knowledge acquired during the two-year period of Coordination in order to ensure the continuity of the activities of the Working Group.

FOOD SAFETY PRIORITIES IN THE AGRICULTURAL POLICY OF THE MEMBER STATES

22. The representative of the delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria made a presentation on Food Safety Priorities in the Agricultural Policy of the Republic of Bulgaria.

23. The delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria informed that under a Decision of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria a national agency on food safety is to be established. The functions of this agency will be to consolidate and coordinate the activities of all the competent bodies regarding food safety.

24. The Bulgarian representative revealed the structure of the national management system of food safety control, including the activities of 28 regional offices for public health safety, as well as national laboratories which monitor the food safety in the country. The representative of the Republic of Bulgaria also described in details the duties and responsibilities of the National Council on Food Safety at the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the process of harmonizing the national legislation with *acquis communautaire* (European established legislation) and respective regulations in the field of food safety.

25. The delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria informed the Working Group on business operators in the field of raw material and food production along the whole food chain, as well as the official competent control authorities of the Republic of Bulgaria undergo training on implementation of the EU Hygiene Package requirements on a regular basis so that the safe product supply is guaranteed and effective control-exercised.

26. The delegation of the Republic of Turkey notified the Working Group of the Turkish agricultural reform which is aimed at, among others, conformation to the market requirements, as well as of learning from good agricultural practices and organic farming.

27. The Turkish representative pointed out the recent developments carried out in the Republic of Turkey in conformity with 2004 regulations concerning food safety and control through all food chain, including primary production, given under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

28. The delegation of the Republic of Serbia gave a presentation on the food safety system in the Republic of Serbia. The institutional framework for the implementation of the food safety control of the food chain was explained.

29. The representative of the Republic of Serbia also emphasized the responsibilities and purposes of the system aimed at ensuring food quality “from farm to table”. The Border Control Measures for importing food and live animal, including raw material of animal origin, were also presented.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP IN THE FIELD OF AGRICULTURE AND AGRO-INDUSTRY

30. The delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria made a presentation on alternative agriculture of the production of agricultural products in the specific regions of Bulgaria. It was emphasized that the public-private partnership in agriculture could lead to sustainable development of the regions, as well as to the cultivation of low-productive and eroded lands.

31. The delegation of the Republic of Turkey presented a concrete example of public-private partnership in the Republic of Turkey and specifically the project on collaboration between the public and private sector in development of hybrid-vegetable varieties and seed production. This project comprises private companies, university departments, research institutions and governmental agencies.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

32. Following the request by the Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Agriculture and Agro-Industry (Moscow, on 28-29 June 2006) to learn the current state of affairs on drafting the Convention on Fishery and Preservation of Living Resources in the Black Sea, the representative of BSEC PERMIS informed the Working Group that the Commission on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution is the leading institution for negotiation of the abovementioned Convention.

33. The Black Sea Commission planned a meeting in Istanbul for the negotiation of the Convention for 13-14 March 2007, but it was postponed until 26-28 September 2007.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

34. The Participants expressed their high appreciation to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Bulgaria for the warm hospitality extended to them in Sofia and the excellent organization of the Meeting.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

35. 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

36. The Working Group adopted the present Report for submission to the next Meeting of the Committee of the Senior Officials of the BSEC Member States and the 16th Meeting of the Council of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States to be held in Belgrade on 17-19 April 2007.