



BS/AI/WG/R(95)1

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

Thessaloniki, 16-18 March 1995

1. The Meeting of the Working Group (WG) on Agriculture and Agro-industry was held in Thessaloniki on 16-18 March 1995.

2. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Floros Konstantinou, Deputy Minister of Agriculture of the Hellenic Republic.

3. The Meeting was attended by the following Participating States of the BSEC.

Republic of Albania
Republic of Armenia
Republic of Azerbaijan
Republic of Bulgaria
Republic of Georgia
Hellenic Republic
Republic of Moldova
Romania
Russian Federation
Republic of Turkey
Ukraine

4. The representatives of Egypt, Israel and of the BSEC Council attended the Meeting as Observers.

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

5. H.E. Georgios Moraitis, Minister of Agriculture of the Hellenic Republic, delivered an inaugural statement which is attached as Annex II.

6. The draft agenda of the Meeting was discussed and adopted. The agenda, as adopted, is attached as Annex III.

7. The delegations held an exchange of views regarding the state of cooperation in the field of Agriculture and Agro-industry among the Participating States and emphasized unanimously the importance of giving impetus to further collaboration in this area. The WG expressed its appreciation to the host country for the initiative to invite representatives of the leadership of the Ministries of Agriculture of the BSEC Participating States which added authority to the decisions taken and enhanced the prospects for their implementation.

COMMUNITY VETERINARY LEGISLATION AND VETERINARY CONTROL

8. Under this item, the delegations had a thorough exchange of relevant and updated information regarding the existing veterinary legislation in the BSEC Participating States.

9. The WG considered the need for implementing appropriate veterinary control regulations.

In this respect, the WG invited the BSEC Participating States to adjust their national legislation in the veterinary sector in conformity with the regulations stipulated by international institutions, including the European Union and the International Office of Epizootics.

10. The Participating States were invited to provide the Secretariat with the texts of their regulations in the veterinary sector for circulation to the appropriate national authorities within the BSEC.

11. The WG considered the proposal launched at the first meeting in 1993 regarding the establishment of a BSEC Veterinary Center, taking into consideration the possibility of expanding the activities of the existing Balkan Veterinary Committee to the BSEC region, and decided to submit this recommendation to the Fifth Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

FISHERIES, AQUACULTURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

12. The delegations present at the Meeting introduced their concrete experience at a national level in the field of fisheries as a significant sector of the economies of the BSEC Participating States.

13. Information was exchanged on various concrete projects in the field of aquaculture. In this respect, the participants stressed the fact that the great potential of the Black Sea and other seas of the BSEC region as well as of the existing rivers could be better utilized for economic purposes.

14. The Hellenic Delegation expressed the readiness of the Hellenic Republic to avail the services and the facilities of the Fisheries Research Institute of Kavala toward promoting the cooperation among the BSEC Participating and Observer States.

15. Referring to the impact of the development of aquaculture on the state of the environment in the BSEC region, the WG called upon the Participating States to undertake pertinent concrete measures for protecting the aquatic environment from degradation and for preserving biological diversity in the context of the Black Sea ecosystem.

The Secretariat was requested to further consider this subject in connection with the activities of the WG on Environmental Protection.

JOINT VENTURES -- EXAMINATION OF THE POTENTIAL FOR COOPERATION

16. Under this agenda item, the delegations had a preliminary exchange of views on possible joint projects of cooperation among the interested BSEC Participating States in the fields of agriculture and agro-industry.

17. The WG invited the BSEC Participating States to submit to the Secretariat all information pertaining to the existing national legal framework for the establishment and the operation of joint ventures. The Secretariat will circulate the received material to the BSEC Participating and Observer States.

18. The participants agreed to discuss the issue of promoting the cooperation among enterprises involved in joint ventures in the sector of agriculture within the BSEC region at the next WG meeting. In this respect, the Secretariat, in close cooperation with the BSEC Council, will prepare and circulate a comprehensive list of the existing joint ventures which will be based on the relevant information submitted by the Participating States.

19. The WG took note of the specific proposals for joint ventures in the sector of agriculture made by the Delegations of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Bulgaria and the Hellenic Republic. The WG took note of the proposal made by the Delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria regarding the establishment of a BSEC center for mountainous and semi-mountainous agriculture. This proposal will be further studied.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

20. The participants took note of the generous offer of the Government of Israel to provide eleven scholarships through the Center for International Cooperation (MASHAV) in various sectors of agriculture and expressed their appreciation. The delegations present at the Meeting of the WG agreed that the appropriate national authorities would send to the Secretariat concrete information on their candidates by 31 March 1995.

21. The Delegation of the Arab Republic of Egypt expressed the readiness of its country to arrange a Training Course for each Participating State in various fields of agriculture. The Delegation conveyed the wish of the Egyptian side to cooperate with the Participating States in the field of high quality marine fish and shrimp.

22. The Secretariat was requested to contact international and regional organizations, such as the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), etc., inviting them to exchange documentation and experience with the BSEC in the sectors of agriculture and agro-industry and to identify possible sources of providing technical and financial assistance to BSEC projects of multilateral cooperation.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

23. The participants expressed their sincere thanks and gratitude to the Government of the Hellenic Republic for hosting the Meeting and for the excellent arrangements as well as for the warm hospitality extended to them during their stay in Thessaloniki.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

24. The WG welcomed the proposal of the Russian Federation to host the next WG meeting in Sochi either in October or in November 1995.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

25. The WG adopted the present report for submission to the Fifth Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs.