

**JOINT DECLARATION
OF THE MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE
OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES
(Moscow, 7 October 2011)**

We, the Ministers of Agriculture of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) met in Moscow on 7 October 2011, within the framework of the Russian BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office to assess the cooperation in the field of agriculture and agro-industry of the Member States and to identify the potential mechanisms of further strengthening the cooperation in this area;

Bearing in mind that BSEC, throughout its nineteen years of existence, has endeavoured to bring its Members together guided by common ideas, goals and principles;

Taking into account that the BSEC region, with its unique geographical location, possesses a strategic importance in connecting Europe and Asia;

Being determined to make every effort for progress in cooperation between our relevant national institutions and to create a favourable environment for initiating joint projects and programmes of common interest;

Taking into consideration the continuously growing trade in agricultural products in the BSEC region;

Recognizing that the role of the national relevant institutions should evolve to take into account the changes which have occurred during recent years, including the increasing importance of securing the international trade supply of agricultural goods;

Being conscious that it is necessary to ensure a correct balance between trade facilitation of agricultural goods and the measures to safeguard the population of the Member States against the non-qualitative products;

Emphasizing the need to conduct a target-oriented training of the national experts in the field of food safety, including in joint cooperation with international and regional organizations and initiatives;

Acknowledging the necessity to intensify efforts for the facilitation of movements of agricultural goods within the BSEC region by simplifying customs formalities and reducing waiting times at the border crossing points, particularly fresh fruit and vegetables;

Being confident that agriculture and agro-industry are major assets for sustainable social and economic development and the BSEC Member States, based on their rich and long-lasting tradition, are willing to devote particular attention for the further development and strengthening of these fields, both at national level and in the Organization as a whole;

Believing that after nineteen years of experience, BSEC shall take concrete steps and achieve tangible results in the areas of agriculture and agro-industry, which in turn should open up the potential of the region;

Have agreed upon:

1. **Intensification** of joint efforts to promote cooperation among the Ministries of Agriculture of the BSEC Member States, in order to help to reduce regional disparities and to give an impetus to the regional trade in agricultural products;
2. **Cooperation** with relevant international organizations and structures in order to coordinate the activities in agriculture and agro-industry matters, while fully reflecting the interests of the Member States, through devising joint action plans and instituting appropriate coordination mechanisms which would yield fruitful results for the region;
3. **Cooperation** of the BSEC Member States in vine-growing and wine-making sectors and joint organization of and participation in the wine exhibitions and fairs.
4. **Cooperation** among the BSEC Member States' national genetic banks of plants for protecting, storing and imploring the genetic resources of plants in order to include the latters into national programs of selection and to secure biodiversity. Consideration of opportunities to elaborate an agreement on bio-technology methods.
5. **Organization** of workshops and seminars in the BSEC Member States in order to build-up favorable conditions for the public-private cooperation on issues related to agriculture.
6. **Exchange** of experience and best practices among agrarian research and educations institutions, dealing with similar issues in agriculture and agro-industry in the BSEC Member States.
7. **Consideration** of the relevant BSEC PDF applications, implementation of regional projects in the field of production and processing of agricultural products as well as in other related areas.
8. **Cooperation** in selection, reproduction and protection of plants, further enhancement of cooperation among the veterinary, phyto-sanitary and plant quarantine services of the BSEC Member States, elaboration of joint regional programs for effective management and control of the plant quarantine disease.
9. **Review** of the opportunities for simplification of export and import procedures for agricultural products among the BSEC Member States, particularly for the fresh fruit and vegetables.
10. **Development** of cooperation and exchange of information and experience in the field of food safety among central competent authorities, national reference laboratories and the private sector enterprises of the BSEC Member States.
11. **Promotion** of the active dialogue with other international organisations, regional co-operation initiatives and programmes in the field of agriculture.

12. **Consultation** on the elaboration of harmonizing the labelling standards for food products, as an important part of food quality and food safety, taking into account the obligations arising for BSEC Member States in the framework of their membership in other regional and international organizations and agreements.

The Participants expressed their gratitude to the Government and People of the Russian Federation for their warm hospitality and the outstanding organization of the Meeting.
