



Yalta, 3 October 2008

BS/WG/CM/R(2008)3

**REPORT OF THE MEETING  
OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP  
ON CUSTOMS MATTERS**

**Yalta, 2-3 October 2008**

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Customs Matters was held in Yalta, Ukraine, on 2-3 October 2008.
2. The Meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Pavel PASHKO, Deputy Head of the State Customs Service of Ukraine, and Mr. Sergey KOPOSOV, Head of Regional Information Customs House.
3. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the following BSEC Member States:
  - Republic of Armenia
  - Republic of Bulgaria
  - Russian Federation
  - Republic of Serbia
  - Republic of Turkey
  - Ukraine
4. The representative of the European Commission participated in the Meeting in the capacity of BSEC Observer.
5. The representative of the BSEC-URTA participated in the Meeting in the capacity of the BSEC Sectoral Dialogue Partner.
6. The List of Participants is attached as Annex I to the present Report.

**ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

7. The Agenda of the Meeting was discussed and adopted. The Agenda, as adopted, is attached as Annex II to the present Report.

**STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND OF THE MEETING OF THE HEADS OF CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATIONS IN THE FIELD OF CUSTOMS MATTERS**

8. The Working Group discussed the ways and means of implementation of the Decision of the 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the BSEC Council related to customs matters particularly the instruction to the Working Group on Customs Matters to consider at its next meeting the possibility of establishing a preliminary information exchange mechanism based on a legal document to be negotiated and concluded among the interested Member States.

9. The Working Group stated that this decision is being implemented as the Agenda of the Meeting includes relevant item which is considered under Agenda Item 5.

**CONSIDERATION OF PROJECT APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDING TO THE BSEC PROJECT DEVELOPMENT FUND**

10. The Working Group took note of the information concerning the activities of the BSEC Project Development Fund (PDF), the procedures for submitting the application forms for funding as well as on the available amount for project financing.

11. The Working Group also took note of the decision of the 18<sup>th</sup> Council to establish the Hellenic Development Fund (HDF) and expressed the hope that the new fund would increase the amount available for each project application and would consider and finance the applications in a more flexible way and in a shorter period of time.

12. The Working Group agreed that the participants would inform the relevant institutions and public and private companies in their own countries regarding the possibility to submit project applications to the BSEC Project Development Fund.

**CONSIDERATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTIONS OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP ON CUSTOMS MATTERS**

13. The Working Group considered, amended and approved the Plan of Action of the Working Group on Customs Matters, elaborated by Ukraine in its capacity of the Country-Coordinator of the Working Group.

The Action Plan, as adopted, is attached as Annex III.

**CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBILITY TO ESTABLISH A PRELIMINARY INFORMATION EXCHANGE MECHANISM AMONG CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATIONS OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (BSEC) MEMBER STATES**

14. Following the instruction of the 18<sup>th</sup> Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States (Kyiv, 17 April 2008), the Working Group considered the possibility of

establishing a preliminary information exchange mechanism among Customs Administrations of the interested BSEC Member States.

15. The Working Group stressed that the idea of establishment of cooperation in the field of exchange of preliminary information on goods and vehicles, moved through the border of the BSEC Member States, could be an effective instrument to combat customs fraud and ensure proper implementation of customs legislation.

16. The Working Group considered feasible to establish a preliminary information exchange mechanism among the interested BSEC Member States and other interested Observer States and international organizations.

17. The representative of the European Commission stated that the EC shows a positive approach towards the establishment of a preliminary information exchange mechanism among the BSEC Member States, pointing out that the EU has already established systems of exchange of information among the EU Members. He also stated that the EC welcomes and encourages the establishment of such systems as they are regarded as useful tools and effective instruments of reducing waiting times at the borders and stimulating trade flows among the participating countries. Pointing out to the fact that three EU Member States that are also members of the BSEC cannot participate in such an arrangement, he suggested that only the European Union could represent these countries and participate in a future arrangement to be developed within the BSEC. The representative of the EU reiterated the fact that efforts of the BSEC Member States to establish a preliminary information exchange mechanism could be assisted and complemented, also financially, within the framework of European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) and Technical Assistance Information Exchange Program (TAIEX), including organization of specific workshops and seminars for exchange of experience and training of personnel.

18. Representatives of the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Serbia stated that at this stage it was not feasible to establish such a multilateral mechanism due to the complexity of legal and technical issues.

19. The Working Group instructed the BSEC PERMIS to elaborate a draft resolution of the Council with regard to discussing the possibility of signing a legal document on establishing a preliminary information exchange mechanism among the interested BSEC Member States.

20. The Working Group agreed to consider at its next Meeting the details and the framework of establishing a preliminary information exchange mechanism among the interested BSEC Member States.

21. The Working Group recommended to the BSEC Council to address an official invitation to the European Commission, as a BSEC Observer and an interested party, to participate in, and possibly contribute financially to the process of establishment of a preliminary information exchange mechanism among the interested BSEC Member States.

22. The Working Group also suggested to organize a workshop in Ukraine or Moldova, with the participation and assistance of the EC, in order to exchange experience on the existing

bilateral agreement on a preliminary information exchange of customs data between these two countries.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

23. Under this Agenda Item the representative of the BSEC-URTA made a presentation on the conclusions of the Black Sea Ring Highway Caravan, including the benefits of the Member States that may result from reducing the waiting times for lorries at the borders of the Member States. The said presentation is attached as Annex IV.

24. The Working Group expressed its gratitude and appreciation to Ukraine as the Host Country of the Meeting, for the hospitality and excellent conditions extended to the participants during their stay in Yalta.

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

25. The date and venue of the next Meeting of the Working Group on Customs Matters will be communicated to the BSEC Member States through BSEC PERMIS.

### **ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING**

26. 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 to be held in Tirana on 21-22 October 2008.