



BS/EDU/WG/R(2008)1

**REPORT
OF THE MEETING OF THE BSEC
WORKING GROUP ON EDUCATION**

Athens, 20-21 November 2008

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Education was held in Athens on 20-21 November 2008.
2. The Meeting was co-chaired by Ms. Melina PAPADAKI, Director, and Ms. Roy CHOURDAKI, Head of Division, Directorate of International Relations in Education, Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs of the Hellenic Republic, and Mr. Nerses GEVORGYAN, Adviser to the Minister, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Armenia.
3. 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
Romania
Russian Federation
Republic of Serbia
Republic of Turkey
4. The representative of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) also participated in the Meeting as BSEC Related Body.
5. The list of participants is attached as Annex I.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

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

STATE OF AFFAIRS RELATIVE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TWO-YEAR PLAN OF ACTION OF BSEC COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION (2006-2008) AND OF THE JOINT ATHENS DECLARATION OF THE MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR EDUCATION (2005):

a) Follow-up on cooperation in development of national frameworks of qualifications with aim to secure compatibility of the educational systems in the BSEC region;

7. The representative of the Republic of Turkey, following the commitment taken at previous Meeting of the Working Group, informed on the preparations of the Conference “Cooperation in the development of national frameworks of qualification with the aim to achieve better compatibility of the educational systems in the BSEC region”, to be held in Turkey on May or September 2009.

8. The revised program and scope of the Conference have been communicated by Turkish Side to Member States, through PERMIS, on 6 October 2008, although with no due feedback (names of participants and speakers).

9. The Working Group instructed the PERMIS to disseminate again the Note Verbal of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey with regard to the Conference, thus reminding the Member States to nominate their participants.

10. The participants stressed the importance of the issue for the activities of the Working Group and took a pledge to promptly communicate to the organizer and host the requested details.

11. Furthermore, the delegation of Romania suggested the Republic of Turkey to invite the representative of the Council of Europe (CoE) to the Conference to secure the proper information on the latest development with regard to the Bologna Process.

12. The representative of the Hellenic Republic suggested May as more suitable for holding the Conference and asked the Turkish Side to investigate possibilities.

b) Follow-up on creation of a network and a web-site (portal);

13. The representative of the Hellenic Republic made the presentation “Portal for Education in the BSEC”, which is attached as Annex III.

14. The participants exchanged views on the creation of a network, website and on the front page and the content of the Portal and decided to communicate references of contact persons from the respective Ministries through the PERMIS to the Country-Coordinator not later than 15 December 2008.

15. Furthermore, the representative of Georgia informed that it has nominated Mr. Berika SHUKAKIDZE, Head of Analytical Department of the Ministry of Education and Science, as the contact person to the above mentioned Portal.

c) Follow-up on investigation of the possibility of elaborating joint programs and promoting scientific research between Universities and Institutions of Higher

Education with emphasis on social learning in accordance with the laws and regulations existing in each country (Lifelong Learning through developing training programs at High and Higher Education level, etc);

16. The representative of the Republic of Albania informed on bilateral cooperation in education that it has with some BSEC Member States.

17. The representative of the Republic of Bulgaria informed on the activities and on the cooperation of the Technical University of Sofia and Agricultural University of Plovdiv with analog partners of the BSEC Countries.

18. The representative of Georgia informed on the willingness of its Country to organize and fund joint programs in Higher Education among the BSEC Member States and requested the interest parties to address the Georgian Ministry of Education and Science.

d) Elaboration on the topic “Providing better transparency of qualifications from Vocational and Educational Training (VET) in the BSEC Member States”;

19. The representative of the Republic of Turkey informed on revised national regulations on providing better transparency of qualifications from Vocational and Educational Training (VET) in Turkey and suggested further cooperation and experience sharing.

e) Exchange of information and practical cooperation with other BSEC Working Groups in related spheres of activity with aim to provide better coordination and to create new synergies for the implementation of the Action Plan;

20. The Country-Coordinator informed the participants on the deliberation it had with the Country-Coordinator of the Working Group on Culture and expressed the view that there are no co-related topics deemed proper to be dealt together.

21. The delegation of the Hellenic Republic also informed that it will contact the representative of the Country-Coordinator of the Working Group on Cooperation in Science and Technology and provide the information on the outcome.

f) Follow-up discussion on the project of the Council of Europe considering teaching and inter-cultural dialogue in the Black Sea region.

22. The Country-Coordinator informed on the projects of the Council of Europe, which might be relevant to the BSEC WG on Education, and proposed investigating about signing of a Memorandum of Understanding.

23. The Working Group agreed to give a mandate to the Country-Coordinator to investigate on the issue.

24. The Working Group took note of the project of the Council of Europe “The Living Library”, as presented by the BSEC PERMIS Executive Manager, and decided to entrust the BSEC PERMIS to find out on the modalities and ways of realization.

NEW ACTION PLAN (2008-2010)

25. The Country-Coordinator presented the Draft Action Plan (1 November 2008 – 31 October 2010).

26. The Draft Action Plan was discussed, amended and adopted. The Action Plan, as adopted, is attached as Annex IV.

PRESENTATION AND CONSIDERATION OF PDF AND REGIONAL PROJECTS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION AMONG BSEC MEMBER STATES

27. The Working Group took note of the information by the BSEC PERMIS Executive Manager on the new regulation of the BSEC Project Development Fund (PDF) according which the priorities project areas need to be defined. He provided information on the establishment of the Hellenic Development Fund (HDF) and in this respect deliberated on opportunities it provides for funding BSEC projects.

28. The participants proposed that concrete assignments for those projects which could be submitted to PDF, HDF and international organizations and institutions (UNESCO, Council of Europe, European Commission) for consideration and eventual financial support should be determined at subsequent stages of co-operation, upon evaluating the priorities.

USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT) IN EDUCATION:

a) Pilot Project on ICT (Turkey) – Follow-up;

29. For detailed information on the issue, see paragraphs 7-12.

b) ICT and WG Terms of Reference.

30. Following the outcome of discussions at the Meeting of Undersecretaries and Chief of Executives of the BSEC Ministries of Education (Istanbul, August 2007) and the suggestions of the Undersecretaries to include the agenda item (Use of ICT in Education) for discussion and appropriate actions of the Working Group, the participants decided to amend the Terms of Reference.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND FOLLOW-UP OF THE DECLARATIONS AND JOINT STATEMENTS ADOPTED BY THE MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR EDUCATION (JOINT ATHENS DECLARATION OF THE MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR EDUCATION OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES, ATHENS 2005)

31. Upon clarifications by the BSEC PERMIS Executive Manager relative to the “Implementation of the Resolution of the Council and the follow-up of the Declaration of Ministers Responsible for Education (2005)”, the participants decided to secure a checking mechanism on taking commitments deriving from Ministerial Resolution and Action Plan provisions.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

32. The WG decided to revise the Terms of Reference with aim to accommodate the Action Plan provisions, attached as Annex V.
33. The Working Group decided to submit the revised Terms of Reference for the adoption to the BSEC Committee of Senior Officials and to the BSEC Council.
34. The Working Group acknowledged the willingness of the “Alliance of Civilizations” to initiate cooperation with BSEC suggesting BSEC to propose a project and asked the PERMIS to further investigate the issue.
35. The participants requested the PERMIS to be provided with the names and contact details of the permanent representatives of the Member States to the WG on Education.
36. The representative of PABSEC briefed on the educational issues within the framework of PABSEC activities and invited the Member States to visit the website (www.pabsec.org).
37. The Hellenic Party proposed a joint Master Degree program. For this purpose, the Democritus University of Thrace will prepare the draft of the above mentioned project and disseminate it through the PERMIS to the BSEC Member States in order to inform the relevant Higher Education Institutions which will be willing to participate in the project. The results of this proposal will be discussed in details at the next Meeting of the WG on Education.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

38. The participants expressed their high appreciation to the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs of the Hellenic Republic for the warm hospitality extended to them in Athens and the excellent organization of the Meeting, as well as to Professor Konstantinos SIMOPOULOS, Rector of the Dimocritus University of Thrace, for the proposal to host the next Meeting of the Working Group.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

39. The next Meeting of the Working Group on Education will be held at the Democritus University of Thrace in Alexandroupolis/Greece and the Member States will be informed of the dates through the PERMIS before the end of the Armenian Chairmanship-in-Office.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

40. The present Report was adopted for submission to the next Meeting of the BSEC Committee of Senior Officials to be held in Istanbul, at the BSEC Headquarters, on 21-22 January 2009.