



BS/CM/WG/R(98)1

**REPORT
OF THE MEETING
OF THE
WORKING GROUP ON COMMUNICATIONS**

Yerevan, 15-16 April 1998

1. The Meeting of the Working Group (WG) on Communications of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) was held in Yerevan, Armenia on 15-16 April 1998.
 2. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Robert Harutunyan, Deputy Minister of Telecommunications of the Republic of Armenia.
 3. The Meeting was attended by the following Participating States of the BSEC:
 - Republic of Armenia
 - Republic of Bulgaria
 - Georgia
 - Hellenic Republic
 - Republic of Moldova
 - Russian Federation
 - Ukraine
 4. The representatives of the Arab Republic of Egypt attended the Meeting as Observer.
- The list of participants of the Meeting is attached as Annex I.
5. H.E. Mr. Grigor POKHPATYAN, Minister of Telecommunications of the Republic of Armenia, attended a session of the Meeting.
 6. Mr. Robert Harutunyan made an inaugural statement. The text of the statement is attached as Annex II.

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

EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND THEIR INTERNATIONAL LINKAGES

8. Under this agenda item, the delegations exchanged views on the development of communications in the Participating States of the BSEC and presented their reports regarding present situation and perspectives in the field of communications.

9. They also presented information regarding the structural changes in the field of communications in the BSEC Participating States and in particular with regard to their liberalization and legal framework required for these changes.

10. The Working Group discussed the problems related to the introduction of new telecommunication services in the BSEC Participating States in connection with developing regional and international links.

STATE OF AFFAIRS AND FURTHER PROSPECTS OF THE REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROJECTS (KAFOS, BSFOCS, TAE, ETC.)

11. A thorough exchange of views took place on the current situation and prospects for development and implementation of concrete projects in the BSEC region (KAFOS, BSFOCS, TAE, TBL, ITUR, etc.)

12. The delegations expressed their satisfaction for the completion of KAFOS, ITUR and TBL projects.

13. The representatives expressed the worries about the delay in implementing the other regional projects (BSFOCS, TAE.) Some delegations emphasized the necessity of speeding up the implementation of the above-mentioned projects and agreed upon that the countries which are taking part in the BSFOCS would endeavour to have it ready for operating in the first half of 1999.

14. The representatives of the Participating States agreed to make all possible efforts so that the international traffic originating from other Participating States to be routed via their territories to international gateways and existing fiber-optic cables.

15. The representative of Bulgaria informed the Meeting regarding the INMS (International Network Management System) program. The delegates kindly asked the Bulgarian representative to provide the detailed information on this program and to inform the relevant institutions of the Participating States.

PRIVATIZATION AND INVESTMENT PLANS IN THE SECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS IN THE PARTICIPATING STATES. STRENGTHENING

OF LINKAGES BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENTAL COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITIES AND PRIVATE COMPANIES ACTING IN THE COMMUNICATIONS FIELD

16. Under this agenda item, the delegates exchanged views on privatization process in telecommunications in their own countries. They presented information regarding the legal aspects of this process.

17. While appreciating the results of the first stage of privatization of state-owned companies in some Participating States, they stressed the importance of involvement of the private sector from the area and outside it in the privatization process.

18. The delegates discussed the ways and means of involvement of the private companies in the projects and programs implemented in the BSEC region and in this regard they stressed the necessity of setting up the legal framework of relations between Government authorities and private sector in implementing such projects and programs.

19. The delegates presented the information regarding the investment opportunities in the field of telecommunications in the Participating States and called upon both national and international companies to use these opportunities.

COOPERATION OF THE PARTICIPATING STATES IN THE UTILIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS

20. The representative of the Russian Federation informed the Meeting concerning the possibility of collaboration in utilizing satellite communications facilities in the BSEC region. The representatives of other Participating States showed an interest in the proposal of the Russian Federation.

21. The delegates agreed upon that additional information concerning this issue will be transmitted to the interested countries upon request.

NEW PROJECTS AND AREAS OF COOPERATION

22. Some delegations informed the Meeting regarding new projects that are being implemented in their countries and agreed upon that the issue concerning the new projects of regional scale be discussed at the next meeting of the Working Group.

23. The representative of the Hellenic Republic proposed to use their possibilities of organizing training courses for the personnel of the Participating States in the field of communications. The delegates appreciated this proposal and agreed upon to consult each other before organizing such courses.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

24. The delegations expressed their gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Armenia for the warm hospitality extended to them and for the good arrangements made for the Meeting.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

25. No issue was raised by the delegations under this agenda item.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

26. The WG agreed that the date and venue of its next meeting would be communicated to the Participating States through the Permanent International Secretariat.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

27. The WG adopted the present report for submission to the Eleventh Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs.