



Annex V to BS/PAM/R(2007)1

**JOINT DECLARATION ON INSTITUTIONAL RENEWAL AND GOOD GOVERNANCE OF THE
MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES**

(Athens, 3 April 2007)

We, the Ministers in charge of Public Administration of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) met in Athens, on 3 April 2007, in order to examine the cooperation in the field of institutional renewal and good governance,

Aiming to implement the BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future (Moscow, 27 April 2001), which affirmed the commitment of the BSEC Member States to support joint actions on key aspects of governance, we met for the first time in Athens two years ago (21 February 2005),

Acknowledging that transparent, responsible, accountable and participatory administration is the foundation on which good governance rests, we declared our will and determination to collaborate for the planning and implementation of reform actions in the public administration,

Recognizing that good governance and the building of effective democratic institutions are a continuous process for all Governments, we invited the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to approve the establishment of a Working Group in order to institutionalize regional cooperation in the field of institutional renewal and good governance, to implement and promote cooperation, to submit recommendations and guidelines in creating short and medium-term action plans for specific aspects of building governance capacity,

Today, two years after the Decision of the BSEC Council for the establishment of the Working Group and after it became operational through the adoption of its Terms of Reference and Action Plan,

Declare the following

We recognize that in the framework of the implementation of the Action Plan particular interest was given in the topic of the improvement of relations between state institutions and society. Thus, the undertaking of Actions such as:

- the training of civil servants in innovative practices and in the use of Information and Communication Technologies, with a view to improve the quality and delivery of public services and to contribute to the simplification of the administrative procedures and
- the cooperation in technical issues and know-how transfer regarding the citizens' right for free access to public information

was encouraged.

We recognize that cooperative action is essential, in order to achieve the effective control of the public administration. In this framework, we greet and support the gradual establishment of a mechanism for exchange of experience and best practice between the institutions responsible for the control of public administration in the BSEC Member States, with the Hellenic Republic as project leader of the initiative.

We consider that the finding of effective methods for the planning and implementation of administrative reform programs constitutes a question of top priority for all the BSEC Member States. In this framework, a relative study by the International Centre for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) was carried out, for the recording of the existing situation in the sector of administrative reform efforts in all Member States, as well as for the indication of the particularities that are presented in each State. This study, proposes ways of tackling the existing problems, as well as methods of maximization of government action, in the sector of planning and implementation of administrative reform programs. The implementation of the recommendations of this study in the administrative reform process of the BSEC Member States could be a contribution to the national efforts undertaken to that end.

We realize the common interest for the planning of programs for the implementation of the regulatory reform principles and for the simplification of administrative processes. For this reason, the planning of a pilot program is encouraged for the implementation of the regulatory reform principles for the facilitation of the Small – Medium Enterprises. This action will contribute in the examination of the institutional and legal aspects and dimensions of this important for the BSEC area of cooperation, through the development of cooperative activities, in consultation with the BSEC Working Group on Small – Medium Enterprises.

We consider as a very important action the transfer of know-how, experiences and good practices on effective and efficient administration from one country to another, as well as from international organizations and institutions such as the United Nations, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the European Union, the Council of Europe etc, organizing expert meetings, educational seminars, conferences or exchange of civil servants. In this framework we support the implementation of common programs and joint projects, in which the BSEC Member States, international institutions and non governmental organizations will be involved.

We invite the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS) to continue supporting the constructive and creative activities of the Working Group on Institutional Renewal and Good Governance, which is responsible for the planning and implementation of respective cooperative actions, based on the provisions of this Joint Declaration, as well as on the provisions of the BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future (Moscow, 27 April 2001).

We express our appreciation and gratitude to the Governments of the Hellenic Republic and the Republic of Serbia for taking the initiative of this Meeting and particularly to the Ministry of Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization of the Hellenic Republic for the organization of this Meeting and the hospitality in Athens.

This Joint Declaration was adopted in Athens, on 3 April 2007.