



BS/CT/WG/R(2005)1

**REPORT OF THE
MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON
COOPERATION IN TOURISM**

Rhodos, Greece, 29-30 March 2005

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism was held in Rhodos, Greece, on 29-30 March 2005.
2. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Athanasios ZACHAROGLU, Head of the International Relations Department, Ministry of Tourism of the Hellenic Republic.
3. H.E. Ambassador George COSTOULAS, Head of B3 Directorate for Regional Economic Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Hellenic Republic welcomed the participants and wished them success in their fruitful and constructive work. The introductory statement of H.E. Mr. COSTOULAS is attached as Annex I.
4. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the following BSEC Member States:
 - Republic of Albania
 - Republic of Armenia
 - Republic of Azerbaijan
 - Republic of Bulgaria
 - Georgia
 - Hellenic Republic
 - Republic of Moldova
 - Romania
 - Russian Federation
 - Republic of Turkey
 - Ukraine
5. The representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of BSEC (PABSEC), the BSEC Business Council and the International Center for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) also participated in the Meeting.
6. The Meeting was attended by Mr. Luigi CABRINI, Regional Representative for Europe of the World Tourism Organization (WTO) as an official Guest. Mr. CABRINI delivered a comprehensive statement on the activities of WTO relevant to the BSEC Member States.
7. The draft agenda of the Meeting was discussed and adopted. The agenda, as adopted, is attached as Annex II.

REVIEW AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON NATIONAL POLICIES OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE BSEC AREA – BEST PRACTICES AND RELEVANT EXPERIENCE IN E.U. AND W.T.O.

8. The Hellenic Delegation made a comprehensive presentation on the issue of the sustainable development of tourism in Greece.

9. All the participating delegations agreed on the importance of exchanging experience and best practices in this field and proceeded to useful presentations of their national measures and actions. Moreover the international experience was presented by the Chair of the Meeting emphasizing the recent initiative of the European Commission to adopt an Agenda 21 for sustainable tourism in Europe and the relevant activities of the WTO's Committee on Sustainable Development.

10. Taking into account the ongoing developments in the field of sustainable development of tourism in the BSEC region and beyond, the WG agreed to include this issue in the agenda of its future meetings.

COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF MARITIME TOURISM - LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF TOURIST PORTS

11. Under this agenda item, the Hellenic Delegation presented an overall introduction about maritime tourism and the institutional framework of tourist ports in Greece. During the presentation, it was underlined that the Hellenic Ministry of Tourism will conduct international bidding competitions for long-term concession of use and exploitation of tourist ports of various types, such as marinas, shelters or anchorages, that have been proposed under the Greek Law.

12. The Hellenic Delegation will forward the announcement of the calls for bidding to the relevant authorities of the BSEC Member States and through them to the potential investors of their countries.

13. The delegations considered the issue of various aspects of maritime tourism and agreed that the exchange of know-how and experience in the sector, is useful for the development of the cooperation in this field of tourism in the BSEC framework.

PRESENTATION OF THE “BRINGING BSEC CLOSER TO EUROPE: TRAIN THE TRAINERS TOURISM PROGRAM” TO BE HELD IN RHODOS DURING MAY 2005

14. The WG welcomed the offer by the Hellenic Delegation, in its capacity as Country-Coordinator of the WG, to organize in Rhodos in the second half of May 2005, the two-week Seminar “Bringing BSEC Closer to Europe: Train the Trainers Tourism Program”. Detailed information on the seminar is attached as Annex III. The seminar will be organized by the Hellenic Ministry of Tourism in cooperation with the Organization of Tourism Education and Training, and will be addressed to trainers of tourism schools or middle and top management staff who work in the hospitality and tourism industry and may be employed as trainers in the future. Each BSEC Member State can participate with two persons. To that end, the Member States are invited to forward to the organizers, through the PERMIS channel, the CVs and other relevant information of the candidates by 20 April

2005. The minimum requirements for participation must include a good knowledge of English language as well as experience of at least three years in the tourism and hospitality industry.

PRESENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN FOR THE BSEC TOURISM COOPERATION

15. Since Greece assumed the function of Country-Coordinator for the WG on Cooperation in Tourism, the Hellenic Delegation presented its Plan of Actions for the two-year term-in-office (November 2004-October 2006). The text of the Action Plan is attached as Annex IV.

16. The Action Plan focuses on two main priority fields of activities for tourism cooperation among BSEC Member States: Sustainable development of tourism and tourism education and training. A concrete and immediate action envisaged in the Action Plan is the organization by the Hellenic Ministry of Tourism of a two-week Seminar “Bringing BSEC Closer to Europe: Train the Trainers”.

17. The delegations welcomed the Action Plan, made concrete proposals and expressed their conviction that it will greatly contribute to the successful endeavors of the WG in the following period.

18. The Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism proposed to organize a four-day course on eco-tourism. The accommodation expenses of two participants from each BSEC Member State will be covered by the Ministry. The course will be convened by May 2006. The target group will be determined in due time.

ELABORATION OF THE DECLARATION OF RHODOS ON TOURISM COOPERATION OF BSEC MEMBER STATES

19. The delegations of the BSEC Member States actively took part in the elaboration of the Draft Rhodos Declaration of the Ministers of Tourism of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). The final draft of the Declaration is attached as Annex V.

20. The participants were of the opinion that the Meeting of the Ministers of Tourism of the BSEC Member States will provide a meaningful input to these initiatives and could influence their content to the benefit of the BSEC Member States.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

21. The Ukrainian Delegation proposed to create a commission on developing the system and the methodology of tourism education in the Black Sea area. The discussion on this issue will be made during the meeting of the WG on Cooperation in Tourism at a later stage.

22. The Delegations of the Republic of Moldova and of the Russian Federation expressed the view that certain problems in obtaining visas by their citizens that have occurred after the enlargement of the European Union should be discussed at the meeting of the WG on Cooperation in Tourism at a later stage.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

23. With respect to the date and venue of the next meeting, two proposals were provided. Moldovan delegation expressed the will to organize a Meeting of the WG on Cooperation in Tourism during their Chairmanship-in-Office, tentatively on 6-7 October 2005. The Romanian Delegation proposed to convene a Meeting of the WG on Cooperation in Tourism by April 2006 in Romania. The exact information of these meetings will be communicated to the BSEC Member States through the BSEC PERMIS in due time.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

24. The WG adopted the present Report and submitted it for consideration to the Meeting of the Ministers of Tourism of the BSEC Member States to be held in Rhodos on 31 March 2005 and to the Meeting of the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to be held in Komotini, Greece, on 23 April 2005.