



BS/CT/WG/R(97)1

**REPORT
OF THE
MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON COOPERATION IN TOURISM
Bucharest, 20-21 November 1997**

1. The Meeting of the Working Group (WG) on Cooperation in Tourism was held in Bucharest, Romania on 20-21 November 1997.

2. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. George CALIN, Head of the International Relations Department from the Ministry of Tourism of Romania.

3. The Meeting was attended by the following Participating States of the BSEC:

Republic of Azerbaijan
Republic of Bulgaria
Georgia
Hellenic Republic
Republic of Moldova
Romania
Russian Federation
Republic of Turkey
Ukraine

H.E. Konstantine SALIA, Minister of Tourism and Resorts of Georgia, also attended the Meeting.

4. The representatives of Israel, Poland and the Slovak Republic attended the Meeting as Observers.

The list of participants of the Meeting is attached as Annex I.

5. H.E. Akos BIRTALAN, Minister of Tourism of Romania, made an inaugural speech.

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

WAYS AND MEANS FOR FACILITATING TOURIST MOVEMENT IN THE BSEC REGION

7. The participants had a thorough exchange of information regarding the tourist activities in the BSEC Participating States, with an emphasis on those areas in which a fruitful cooperation on regional level could be developed in the future.

8. Taking into consideration the significant potential of each of the BSEC States in the field of tourism, which still needs to be utilized both within the region, and in relation to the adjacent areas, the participants agreed upon the necessity of improving the geographical distribution of tourism among the countries of the Black Sea region.

They also expressed the view that the local tourism opportunities should be promoted in order to meet specific requirements of potential tourist market segments.

9. The participants welcomed the initiative of the Greek Association of Tour Operators to host in 1998 a meeting of representatives of national travel associations/agencies for considering in-depth a possible efficient cooperation and organizational aspects regarding the establishment of the regional travel association.

10. The WG was in favor of setting up a data bank on tourism, containing relevant and periodically updated information on: accommodation facilities, tourism flow, travel agencies, transport systems, existing legislative framework and border crossing formalities, etc.

In this respect, the assistance of the BSEC Coordination Center for the Exchange of Statistical Data and Economic Information would be very useful. Therefore, an appeal was addressed to the Participating States to transmit, through their relevant national authorities, the filled in Questionnaire to the Center, in order to enable it to start the statistical work.

The participants recommended to the PERMIS to contact some international organizations, such as the World Tourism Organization as well as the European Organization of Statistics, with the kind assistance of Greece with the view to identify possible assistance in terms of know-how and expertise regarding the said project.

11. The WG invited the Participating States to present for the next Meeting their proposals regarding the elaboration of the BSEC joint projects. It considered also the participation in tourism trade fairs with joint stands a useful idea for promoting the above projects.

The participants favored the proposal of setting up a regional tourism trade fair for the BSEC area.

FUTURE PRIORITIES AND VIABLE PROJECTS OF MULTILATERAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION FOR FULFILLING THE BSEC GOALS

12. After an exchange of views on this subject, the participants agreed upon the idea of elaborating a long (or medium)-term program in the field of tourism in the BSEC region, which should be based on market targets and market strategy.

13. A series of concrete projects in the field of tourism infrastructure in the Participating States were presented by the respective delegations and the WG took note with interest of the efforts made at national level in the direction of improving and developing the tourism facilities and services both for tourists of the Black Sea region and outside it.

INVOLVEMENT OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN TOURISM INDUSTRY

14. The participants exchanged views and proposals with regard to the future involvement of the private sector in the tourism industry. From this point of view, they

underlined the importance of the activities of the BSEC Business Council, as well as the presence of representatives of various associations of private travel companies from the Participating States at the Meeting.

15. The WG called upon the private sector in those countries, as well as the business communities from outside the region to consider the possibility of assisting some tourism infrastructure projects which, after implementation, will be beneficial for both the investors and recipient countries.

DIALOGUE ON ISSUES OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION, FOR ENCOURAGING INVESTMENT PROJECTS, INCLUDING JOINT VENTURES AND FACILITATING ECONOMIC GROWTH IN THE BLACK SEA AREA

16. An exchange of views took also place with the aim to identify possible assistance for some tourism projects in the BSEC region from the part of interested international financial and economic institutions (the European Commission, the World Tourism Organization, the UN-ECE, etc.)

The participants welcomed MIGA and IFC initiatives of holding a Black Sea Investment Conference in June 1998 and instructed the PERMIS to coordinate with BSEP the organizational aspects of involving the BSEC Participating States to the process of its preparation.

They took note of the interest displayed by Georgia to host the above-mentioned Conference.

TRAINING OF SPECIALIZED PERSONNEL

17. The WG, having considered further steps for developing training programs in the field of tourism for the BSEC Participating States, noted with interest the experience reached at the first workshop on hotel catering and tourism, organized in November 1996 in Antalya, Turkey.

18. The participants expressed the need for convening similar workshops on various training areas, such as: tourism management, vocational training for service personnel, training for tour operators, on-the-job training in the activities of travel agencies.

They took note with appreciation of the intent of Greece regarding the organization during 1998 of seminars for the staff of National Tourism Administrations from several BSEC Participating States. The WG also welcomed the offer of Greek School for Tourist Professions to provide training at the hotels during the summer 1998 for students as well as seminars for the staff of Travel Agencies and Hotels.

19. The WG referred to the possible assistance in this direction from the part of some Observer States which have long and rich traditions in training specialized personnel for tourism.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

20. No issues were raised under this agenda item.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

21. The participants expressed their sincere thanks and gratitude to the Romanian authorities, and in particular to the Ministry of Tourism of Romania, for hosting the Meeting and for the excellent arrangements as well as the warm hospitality extended to them.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

22. It was agreed that the Participating State which is interested to convene the next meeting of the WG, preferably during 1998 - for ensuring a certain continuity of the activities of this BSEC Subsidiary body - will transmit till 1 April 1998 the relevant proposals regarding the date and venue of the next meeting to the PERMIS, in order to be circulated to the Participating States, for consideration.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

23. This Report was adopted by the Meeting of the Working Group, with the recommendation to be submitted to the Eleventh Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs.
