

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (UNECE)  
ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION (BSEC)

**JOINT UNECE-BSEC REGIONAL SEMINAR ON  
TRADE FACILITATION AND SINGLE WINDOW**

**Istanbul, BSEC Headquarters, 25 September 2014**

**Summary Proceedings**

1. On 25 September 2014, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Organization of Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) organized a Joint Regional Seminar on Trade Facilitation and Single Window at the BSEC Headquarters.
2. Ambassador Traian CHEBELEU, Deputy Secretary General of the BSEC PERMIS, and Mr. Mario APOSTOLOV, UNECE Regional Adviser, opened the Seminar with welcoming remarks.
3. Participants from the following BSEC Member States attended the Seminar:
  - Republic of Armenia
  - Republic of Azerbaijan
  - Republic of Bulgaria
  - Hellenic Republic
  - Russian Federation
  - Republic of Turkey
  - Ukraine
4. The List of participants is attached is attached as **Annex 1**.
5. The aim of the Seminar was to support trade facilitation in the BSEC Region and to foster implementation of innovative tools like the Single Window in the BSEC Member States. The participants discussed issues and measures for implementation of trade facilitation measures, notably the possibility to adopt a regional trade facilitation strategy; the implications of the new WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, as well as the possibilities to implement Port Community Systems and inter-organizational exchange of data in the BSEC Region.
6. The Seminar was structured in two sessions on the following topics:
  - Session 1: Trade Facilitation in the BSEC Region: Implementation of the WTO Agreement and other international tools for trade facilitation: towards a regional trade facilitation strategy?

- Session 2: Implementing Port Community Systems and Single Window mechanisms in the BSEC Region: opportunities and challenges.

7. During the two panel sessions, the following presentations were made:

- *Prerequisites for trade facilitation implementation: existing instruments and the need for a strategic approach*, by Mr. Mario APOSTOLOV, Regional Adviser, UNECE Secretariat;

- *Expected outcome and recommendations from the seminar*, by Mr. Samir AHMADOV, Executive Manager, BSEC PERMIS;

- *Turkey's experience regarding WTO Trade Facilitation Negotiations and regional initiatives by Turkey on Trade Facilitation*, by Dr. Tolga TUNCER, Ministry of the Economy of the Republic of Turkey, Directorate General of Trade Agreements;

- *National Trade Facilitation Strategy and Road Map Implementation: Project in cooperation between Greece and UNECE*, by Ms. Kalyto CHRISTODOULOU, International Economic Relations Directorate, Unit B' Customs Affairs and Ms. Eleni METAXA-MARIATOU, Head of Section B of the 19th Division of Customs Procedures, General Secretariat of Public Revenue, D.G. Customs and Excise, Ministry of Finance, Hellenic Republic;

- *Turkey's Experience in the Implementation of the Trade Facilitation Measures and Evaluation of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (ATF-WTO) for the Potential Cooperation in the BSEC Region*, by Mr. Bülent Orhan TÜREL (EU Expert), Ministry of Customs and Trade, Directorate General for the EU and External Relations;

- *Authorized Economic Operator Programme of the Republic of Turkey within the context of Trade Facilitation*, by Ms. Mehtap Ardiç TIREN (Customs and Trade Expert) Ministry of Customs and Trade, Directorate General for the EU and External Relations;

- *The Importance of National and Regional Strategies and Interagency Working Group for Trade Facilitation*, by Mr. Oleg PLATONOV, Chair of the Public Council of Ministry of Trade and Economic Development, Ukraine;

- *Practical steps in implementing a Port Community System: Advice for the BSEC Member States*, by Mr. Richard MORTON, Secretary General, International Port Community Systems Association (IPCSA);

- *Potential for implementing Port Community Systems in the Black Sea Region*, by Mr. Mario APOSTOLOV, Regional Adviser, UNECE;

- *The Port Community System in Odessa: A pilot project and best-practice example for the Black Sea Region*, by Mr. Alexandr FEDOROV, Director General PPL 33-35, Ukraine, and Chairman UNECE WP30;

- *Endeavors and Working Practices of the Republic of Turkey in the field of Single Window*, by Ms. Emine Bilgehan DAĞKIRAN (Customs and Trade Expert) Ministry of Customs and Trade, Directorate General for the EU and External Relations.

8. The presentations were followed by discussions among the participants. From these presentations and discussions, several ideas and conclusions were retained in support of the efforts of the BSEC Member States to facilitate trade in the region.

9. The participants discussed the possibility to draft a regional trade facilitation strategy, taking the needs of the trading community into account. It can be based on analysis of the current (“as-is”) situation in terms of trade facilitation indicators (of the World Bank, OECD, UNECE, etc.) and implementation of concrete trade facilitation instruments and setting up goals for a desired (“to-be”) situation with improvement of the indicators and the implementation of trade facilitation instruments. The strategy can provide guidelines for the BSEC Member States to develop their national programmes for implementation of trade facilitation measures. Information from national plans and strategies for trade facilitation and development will be used in the process. The BSEC Member States can utilize the lessons learned from the Greek trade facilitation reform programme.

10. The strategy may cover a number of trade facilitation instruments, such as:

- Strengthening the efforts of the BSEC Member States to implement international standards and conventions in the area of trade facilitation and supply chain security both in order to improve domestic legislation and to develop regional cooperation in trade facilitation.
- Introducing the concept of Authorized Economic Operator (AEO), and BSEC Member States may cooperate on mutual recognition of AEO.
- Cooperation on mutual recognition of binding information.
- Cooperation on harmonization of Risk Profiles for developing of the Risk Management Systems of the BSEC Member States.
- Improved cooperation for joint border-crossings (joint use of common border gates) including alignment of procedures and formalities at the border, matching opening hours, etc.
- Developing further cooperation among existing and new Single Window systems and data harmonization projects, using international standards and expertise.
- Improving conditions for transit operations in accordance with the principle of freedom of transit in the BSEC Region.

11. A virtual network of experts may be set up to finalize the strategy, and then distribute it for further comments and development to the BSEC Member States.

12. The Seminar paid special attention to the development of Port Community Systems (PCS) in the BSEC Region. The practical guide of the International Port Community Systems Association (IPCSEA) with concrete steps of implementing PCS, as well as the best practice experience of the Odessa Port PCS are recommended for use, in case such systems are developed. The experience of IPCSEA in practical exchange of information among PCSs should be used to develop data exchanges in the BSEC Region.

13. The participants thanked the UNECE Secretariat and BSEC PERMIS for organizing the Seminar and agreed to submit the above mentioned ideas and conclusions to the relevant BSEC bodies, including the Working Groups on Trade, Customs and Transport and the BSEC Business Council, for further consideration.

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