

**JOINT DECLARATION
OF THE MINISTERS PARTICIPATING IN
THE MEETING OF THE MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF ECONOMY
OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES**

(Yalta, 23 May 2013)

The Ministers in Charge of Economy and Heads of Delegations of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC): the Republic of Albania, the Republic of Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Turkey and Ukraine, having met in Yalta, Ukraine, on 23 May 2013,

GUIDED by the BSEC Charter, the Istanbul Summit Declaration on the Black Sea Economic Cooperation signed on 25 July 1992, principles and priorities consolidated in the Istanbul Summit Declaration on the Occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (Istanbul, 26 June 2012) and in the BSEC Economic Agenda: Towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership (Belgrade, 11 June 2012);

RECALLING the Joint Declaration of the Ministers in charge of Economy of the BSEC Member States (Bucharest, 17 May 2011) and the importance of this policy documents as a platform for future cooperation among the BSEC Member States in this field;

HAVING in mind that the Black Sea Region, being a significant market with substantial natural resources and scientific and technical capacity, having a geo-economic importance for the trade worldwide and, in particular, for Europe, Middle East and Asia;

RECOGNIZING the commitments of the BSEC Member States that arise from their bilateral and multilateral agreements, as well as a participation in international and regional organizations, including those dealing with customs;

ACKNOWLEDGING the entering into force of the Free Trade Agreement of the CIS Member States from 18 October 2011;

DISTINGUISHING the arrangements made by the BSEC Member States in ensuring the harmonious development of their economies and extending the multilateral economic cooperation in the BSEC Region;

REAFFIRMING adherence to the principles of liberalization and harmonization of foreign trade regimes observing norms and practices of the WTO;

AWARE of the fact that coordinated joint efforts on enhancing economic integration in the BSEC Region will facilitate sustainable economic growth, creation of new jobs, reduction of poverty, promotion of its investment attractiveness and enhancement of its role in the world economy.

DECLARED their willingness to:

Join efforts at optimization of economic, social, infrastructural, natural, scientific and technical potential for creation of favorable conditions for integration in the Black Sea Region and implementation of priorities consolidated in the Istanbul Summit Declaration on the Occasion of the Twentieth Anniversary of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (Istanbul, 26 June 2012) and in the BSEC Economic Agenda: Towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership;

Contribute to the liberalization of trade within the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation and explore ways of establishing a **Trade and Investment Facilitation Mechanism** among the BSEC Member States in conformity with the standards and rules of the WTO;

Continue joint examination and elaboration of mechanisms for elimination of non-tariff trade barriers in the BSEC Region taking into account the goals of the WTO Doha Development Agenda;

Make efforts to continue the ongoing process of harmonization of customs and border-crossing procedures in conformity with the national legislations of the BSEC Member States;

Create favorable conditions for public–private partnership to enhance trade and economic cooperation in the BSEC Region;

Increase efforts aimed at facilitating successful conclusion of the WTO Doha Round multinational negotiations as a strategically important step towards further liberalization of world trade that will, in particular, benefit the BSEC Member States;

Analyze the possibility of launching an initiative on simplifying procedures of trade within the BSEC – **Black Sea Trade Facilitation Initiative** – under which the BSEC Member States shall take joint (coordinated) actions aimed at simplifying procedures of trade based on the best practices and recommendations of international organizations;

Explore the possibility of the creation by the BSEC Member States of a unified “single window system” (**the Black Sea Single Window Initiative**) for exchanging information on national standard documents and procedures necessary for exercising all import, export, transit and related operations to all participants engaged in trade and transportation;

Commence work on possible creation of an information center (**Black Sea Notifications and Inquiries Initiative**) under the auspices of the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat in order to facilitate information sharing process among BSEC Member States, pertaining to foreign economic activity and related fields by activating the practice of exchange of information on changes in trade regimes;

Introduce under the above initiative the practice of preparing and making public an annual BSEC report “BSEC: measuring progress in diminishing trade barriers”;

Call upon the BSEC Member States to further consider possibilities for reactivating and strengthening the work of the BSEC Coordination Center for the Exchange of Statistical Data and Economic Information;

Explore possibilities for establishment of BSEC Network of Chambers of Commerce and other business organizations/associations of the BSEC Member States;

Invite the BSEC Related Bodies, namely the Parliamentary Assembly of BSEC, the BSEC Business Council, the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank and the International Centre for Black Sea Studies to undertake initiatives, with the involvement of academic, business, industrial and banking stakeholders, in order to promote intra-regional investment and trade activities, as well as the development and transfer of know-how to interested parties;

Call upon the relevant BSEC Working Groups to explore the world experience in creation of regional free trade areas, as well as in facilitating trade procedures, with assistance of international organizations;

and agreed to take practical steps to this end.