



BS/TR/WG/R(99)1

**REPORT
OF THE
MEETING OF THE BSEC
WORKING GROUP ON TRANSPORT**

Alexandroupolis, Greece, 11-12 October 1999

1. The Meeting of the Working Group on Transport was held on 11-12 October 1999 in Alexandroupolis, Greece.
2. The Meeting was chaired by Professor Yannis MANIATIS, Secretary General at the Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Hellenic Republic, who delivered an opening statement on behalf of the Minister of Transport and Communications.
3. The Meeting was attended by the following Participating States of the BSEC:
 - Republic of Albania
 - Republic of Armenia
 - Azerbaijan Republic
 - Georgia
 - Hellenic Republic
 - Romania
 - Russian Federation
 - Republic of Turkey
4. The representatives of the Republic of Italy and the Republic of Poland attended the Meeting as Observers.
5. The Meeting was also attended as guests by the representatives of Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB), European Commission Services, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE), Transport Infrastructure Needs Assessment (TINA) Secretariat and EGNATIA ODOS S.A. The representative of the Republic of Croatia also attended the Meeting as a guest.

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

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

TRANSPORT FACILITATION

Promotion of competitiveness and effectiveness of International Transport Systems- an exemplar case of regional cooperation for the facilitation of road transport in South East Europe

7. The delegations were informed about the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Facilitation of International Road Transport of Goods in the SECI Region which was signed by the Ministers of Transport of the SECI Participating States in Athens on 28 April 1999. This MoU included the following elements which were considered within the Meeting of the Working Group:

a) Harmonization of institutional and regulatory framework according to internationally accepted standards (European Community legislation and UN/ECE Agreements and Conventions)

8. Under this agenda item the delegations exchanged views and presented proposals concerning harmonization of institutional and regulatory framework in the BSEC countries. They pointed out that this goal could be achieved by acceding to the international transport agreements and conventions, particularly those established under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE).

b) Gradual liberalization of international transport market (bilateral and transit transport)

9. Recognizing the need to ensure free and fair competition related to the transport services in the region, the participants agreed that gradual free market access for international transport, both bilateral and transit, will facilitate international transport and trade within all BSEC countries.

The delegations also emphasized that this process shall be carried out in line with the relevant principles prevailing in the European Community and envisaged in the SECI MoU.

c) Technical harmonization concerning weights and dimensions of vehicles

10. The participants agreed that the relevant national authorities in the BSEC Member States shall undertake the appropriate actions in order to harmonize the weights and dimensions of the vehicles. They shall also try to harmonize their national requirements for weights and dimensions with those applicable in the European Community.

d) Development of rational charging policies in international transport, by applying the principles of transparency, efficiency and non-discrimination

11. The delegations were informed about road transport charging policies, prevailing in the framework of the European Community incorporating the certain principles of transparency, cost relatedness and non-discrimination.

e) Development of data bases concerning road networks, charging policies, etc.

12. The participants agreed that data bases concerning road networks, charging policies, etc. could be established and developed further by the Permanent International Secretariat with the support of the BSEC Coordination Center for the Exchange of Statistical Data and Economic Information in close cooperation with the activities of the UN/ECE Secretariat in this regard.

f) Cooperation for transport facilitation in South East Europe and possibilities to expand it in BSEC region

13. The delegations agreed that the WG shall consider the possibilities of establishing cooperation on transport facilitation fields, taking advantage of the “acquis” created in the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding for the facilitation of road transport of goods in SECI region.

In this context, the delegations took note of a proposal prepared by the Government of the Hellenic Republic for preparation of a Protocol providing for an institutionalized cooperation between BSEC and SECI Participating States with the long-term objective of adoption of a common regional framework Agreement on Road Transport.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Transport infrastructure policy in BSEC region: perspectives of integration in the framework of TEN, Pan-European Transport Corridors and TINA

14. The WG agreed that it shall establish criteria for identifying priority projects of common interest, taking advantage of the experience from the TEN-T projects, Pan-European Corridors, TINA initiative as well as the Black Sea PETrA and the Euro-Asian links.

In this respect, priority should be given to projects of common interest, contributing to the upgrading, interconnection and interoperability of the existing networks.

Construction of missing links, maintenance and upgrading of land connections to intermodal freight terminals

15. The participants shared the views that the development of transport infrastructure within the framework of the BSEC shall be carried out with due regard to the neighboring regions.

The delegations emphasized the necessity of taking specific measures through their national authorities for improving the effectiveness and safety of the transport system in the region and for developing their national infrastructures with appropriate links to the Pan-European Transport System.

The representatives of the BSEC Member States expressed their interest to promote the development of intermodal nodes and logistic centers at ports.

Improvement of infrastructure at border crossings

16. The delegations had an exchange of views on the issue of border crossing and came to the conclusion that simplification and harmonization of controls and procedures at the border crossing on the basis of existing international agreements and practices will be a considerable contribution to increasing the effectiveness of international transportation.

They also pointed out that improvement of infrastructure at border crossing would facilitate the economic and commercial relations among the BSEC Member States. The participants reiterated the need to put emphasis in projects improving/upgrading infrastructure at border crossing points.

FINANCING

Public-Private Partnership and criteria for project evaluation based on a market approach

17. The Working Group considered the important role of private sector in financing infrastructure projects, including “Public Private Partnership” as being developed in the European Community.

In this context, the participants agreed that an appropriate legal framework for involving private sector in financing infrastructure and for implementing the PPP pattern should be established.

18. The representative of the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank made a presentation concerning the procedures applied by the BSTDB for financing regional projects, particularly in the BSEC Member States. The representative also mentioned the principle of Public-Private Partnership in co-financing the projects and programs of common interest.

19. The representative of the TINA Secretariat informed the Meeting concerning goals and objectives of the Transport Infrastructure Needs Assessment process.

The delegations stressed the supplementary supporting activities carried out by the TINA Secretariat with regard to the Black Sea PETrA and Pan-European Corridors within the TACIS beneficiary countries.

CONSIDERATION OF THE TRANSPORT ACTION PLAN FOR THE BSEC AND THE ACTION PROGRAM OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP ON TRANSPORT

20. The participants welcomed the Draft Action Plan for the Black Sea Economic Cooperation prepared by Romania and the Draft Action Program of the Working Group on Transport of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation for 1999-2003 elaborated by the Russian Federation as country-coordinators of the Working Group on Transport.

21. They agreed that the delegations will present their written proposals concerning both drafts to the Permanent International Secretariat which, in close cooperation with Romania and the Russian Federation, will prepare a single draft document to be considered and adopted at the next Meeting of the Working Group.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

22. No topics were raised under this agenda item.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

23. The delegations expressed their sincere gratitude to the Government of the Hellenic Republic and the Ministry of Transport and Communications 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

24. The WG agreed that the date and venue of its next meeting would be communicated to the Member States through the Permanent International Secretariat.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

25. The WG adopted the report for submission to the Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Thessaloniki.
