



BS/TR/WG/R(2007)1

REPORT

OF THE MEETING OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP ON TRANSPORT

Belgrade, 12-13 March 2007

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group (WG) on Transport was held in Belgrade, the Republic of Serbia, on 12-13 March 2007.

2. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Branko MARJANAC, Deputy Director, Directorate for Multilateral Economic Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia.

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

Republic of Armenia
Republic of Azerbaijan
Republic of Bulgaria
Hellenic Republic
Republic of Moldova
Romania
Russian Federation
Republic of Serbia
Republic of Turkey
Ukraine

4. The representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) and the BSEC Business Council (BC) also participated in the Meeting.

5. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the International Road Federation (IRF) and the International Road Transport Union (IRU) as Guests.

6. The representatives of the Black and Azov Seas Ports Association (BASPA), the Black Sea International Shipowners Association (BINSA), the Black Sea Region Association of Shipbuilders and Shiprepairers (BRASS) and the Union of Road Transport Associations in the BSEC Region (BSEC-URTA) participated in the Meeting as Organizations having sectoral dialogue partnership with BSEC.

The list of participants is attached as Annex I.

7. The Meeting was addressed by Mr. Borislav BOROVIĆ, Assistant Minister for Capital Investments of the Republic of Serbia. In particular, he underlined the importance of transport cooperation among the BSEC Member States for trade and economic development in the region. He stressed that implementation of the MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods, the MoU on the Coordinated Development of the Black Sea Ring Highway and the MoU on the Development of the Motorways of the Sea in the BSEC Region will open new opportunities for the BSEC cooperation. Furthermore, he expressed his hope that the last two MoUs will eventually be signed at the Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to be held in Belgrade, on 19 April 2007.

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

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE FOLLOW-UP OF THE DECLARATIONS AND JOINT STATEMENTS ADOPTED BY THE MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT. STATE OF AFFAIRS WITH RESPECT TO THE BSEC MOUS IN TRANSPORT FIELD:

9. The delegation of Romania, as the Country-Coordinator, presented the evaluation report of activities of the BSEC Working Group on Transport for the period May 2005 – April 2007. It was noted that for this period two Ministerial Meetings and four Meetings of the Working Group were held. Cooperation agreements were signed with IRU and IRF. Organizations having sectoral dialogue partnership with BSEC, namely BASPA, BINSA, BRASS and BSEC-URTA signed agreement on strengthening cooperation. MoUs with regard to the development of the Black Sea Ring Highway and the Motorways of the Sea were approved by the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Moscow, on 1 November 2006. The evaluation report of Romania contains provisions related to the strengths, weaknesses and lessons to learn with regard to BSEC cooperation on transport.

10. The Working Group assessed positively the achievements of the Romanian coordinatorship and expressed its high appreciation to the Romanian side for the work done.

11. PERMIS was requested to submit this evaluation report to the next Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials.

12. The Working Group considered the state of affairs with regard to the following MoUs:

a. MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region.

13. BSEC PERMIS informed the Working Group about the arrangements for the First Meeting of the Steering Committee on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region to be held in Istanbul, on 21-22 March 2007. The draft documents related to the Meeting are contained in the document file of the current Meeting of the WG.

14. It was noted that, following the relevant decisions of the Meeting of the WG, held in Antalya on 23-24 November 2006, 8 out of 10 state-parties to the MoU appointed their representatives to the Steering Committee. Serbia, not yet being a party to the MoU, also appointed its representatives to the steering Committee. Proposals and recommendations with regard to draft Rules of Procedure and draft Time-Table were submitted by Turkey, Georgia and Moldova.

15. The delegation of Azerbaijan informed that Azerbaijan has appointed its representative to the Steering Committee and there are no objections from the Azerbaijani side to the proposals of the Turkish side with regard to the mentioned draft documents.

16. The delegation of Bulgaria proposed to merge objectives 1 and 2 of the Time-Table.

17. The delegations of Russia and Serbia informed the Working Group that the internal procedures in their countries with regard to the said MoU will be finalized soon and they will eventually sign it during the meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to be held in Belgrade, on 19 April 2007.

b. MoU on Coordinated Development of the Black Sea Ring Highway:

18. The Chairman of the Meeting held a tour de table on the readiness of the BSEC Member States to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on the Coordinated Development of the Black Sea Ring Highway at the 16th Meeting of the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, to be held in Belgrade on 19 April 2007.

19. Consequently, the delegations of Moldova, Greece, Romania and Turkey confirmed that they are ready to sign the said Memorandum. The delegations of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine stated that their internal procedures are at their final stage with a view to signing the Memorandum on 19 April 2007 in Belgrade.

c. MoU on the Development of the Motorways of the Sea. Course of internal legal procedures in the BSEC Member States.

20. The Chairman of the Meeting held a tour de table on the readiness of the BSEC Member States to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on the Development of the Motorways of the Sea in the BSEC Region at the 16th Meeting of the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, to be held in Belgrade on 19 April 2007.

21. Consequently, the delegations of Azerbaijan, Moldova, Greece, Romania and Turkey confirmed that they are ready to sign the said Memorandum. The delegations of Armenia, Bulgaria, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine stated that their internal procedures are at their final stage with a view to signing the Memorandum on 19 April 2007 in Belgrade.

22. The Russian delegation drew attention that some aspects related to the text of the draft MoU will be discussed at the forthcoming Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials.

23. The Secretary General addressed the Meeting underlining the importance of finalizing by the Member States of the internal procedures with regard to the MoUs on the development of the

BSRH and the Motorways of the Sea and their signing during the forthcoming Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Belgrade.

24. Furthermore, the Secretary General informed the participants about the initiative of BSEC PERMIS in cooperation with IRU and BSEC-URTA to organize a BSEC caravan of 12 trucks which will go around the Black Sea on the roads of the BSRH. The caravan will start on 19 April 2007 in Belgrade. It is expected that it will terminate in Istanbul on 30 May 2007. Its principal objective is to promote the Black Sea Ring Highway to the people of BSEC. On its way the caravan will collect relevant data also in cooperation with the competent authorities of the Member States to contribute to the assessment of existing physical and non-physical barriers in and between the BSEC Member States and will present its evaluation and proposals for improvement of the situation within the BSRH project. It is also foreseen that the outcome of the caravan initiative will be presented to the BSEC Summit in Istanbul, on 25 June 2007. The Secretary General said that he will personally address national authorities of the BSEC Member States for facilitating some organizational aspects of the caravan.

25. The representative of IRU made a detailed presentation about the caravan. Materials of the presentation are attached to the Report (Annex III).

26. The Russian delegation stressed the need to receive as soon as possible all necessary technical information regarding the caravan trip in order to complete the necessary formalities in time.

MOU BETWEEN BSEC PERMIS AND PS IGC TRACECA

27. The Working Group amended the draft Memorandum of Understanding between BSEC PERMIS and PS IGC TRACECA and recommended the Committee of Senior Officials to mandate the Secretary General to sign the document on behalf of BSEC PERMIS. The final draft of the said MoU, as agreed by the Working Group, is attached as Annex IV to the present Report.

APPOINTMENT OF COUNTRY-COORDINATOR

28. The Working Group took note of the applications of the Russian Federation and Romania to be appointed as the Country-Coordinator of the Working Group on Transport. Following consultations among the parties concerned the Working Group recommended to the Committee of Senior Officials and the Council to appoint the Russian Federation as Country-Coordinator of the Working Group on Transport for the period 1 May 2007 – 30 April 2009 and Romania for the period 1 May 2009 – 30 April 2011. The Turkish delegation informed that it is considering presenting its candidacy for Country-Coordinator of the WG on Transport for the term 1 May 2007 – 30 April 2009.

APPROVAL OF WORK PROGRAMME IN THE FIELD OF TRANSPORT FOR 2007

29. The WG approved the Work Programme of the BSEC transport activities for 2007. It was agreed that the Member States may amend the Work Programme with other activities if they represent interest for the Member States. Relevant proposals should be sent to the Member States through BSEC PERMIS. The Work Programme as agreed by the WG is attached as Annex V to the present Report.

CONSIDERATION OF PROJECT PROPOSALS

30. No new project proposals were submitted for consideration.

31. The WG discussed the decision of the Committee of Senior Officials, taken at its Meeting held in Istanbul on 27-28 February 2007, regarding the project proposal “Economic Expediency of Opening New International Passenger Line (Ferry) between Ports of Istanbul-Odessa-Yalta-Novorossiysk-Sochi or other” submitted by institutions from Russia (Lead Partner), Turkey and Ukraine. It was agreed that the Member States will inform the project’s Lead Partner about national companies and institutions, if there are any, wishing to become co-applicants of the said project proposal by the end of March 2007.

BSEC COOPERATION WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (UNECE, IRU, IRF) IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT LINKS IN THE BSEC REGION

32. The UNECE representative briefed the Group on the progress and recent developments of the joint UNECE-UNESCAP Project on developing Euro-Asian transport links and the TEM and TER Master Plan, of interest to the BSEC region.

33. He stressed, in particular, that tangible results had been achieved with regard to the identification of the main Euro-Asian road, rail, inland water transport routes and transhipment points; analysis of the main physical and non-physical obstacles along the selected routes; and the evaluation and prioritization of infrastructure projects on the basis of an agreed methodology.

34. The UNECE representative invited the Group to further strengthen its cooperation with the UNECE in the follow up work of the TEM and TER Master Plan and the UNECE-UNESCAP joint Project on developing Euro-Asian transport links.

35. The WG stressed that PERMIS should take part in the activities of the UNECE-UNESCAP related to developing Euro-Asian transport links and inform the BSEC Member States about this work.

36. The WG underlined the importance of accession by the BSEC Member States to the UNECE transport conventions and agreed to consider this issue in detail at its next meeting.

37. The Director General of IRF reported that following the signing at the November 2006 WG meeting in Antalya of a MoU between the IRF and BSEC, the two organisations have been

collaborating on the preparation of the 1st Black Sea Ring Highway conference to be held on 14-16 May 2007 in Istanbul. Because of the connections between the Black Sea region and Central Asia this will be combined with the 4th IRF Silk Road Conference.

38. The meeting will commence with a ministerial session to be chaired by the former President of the Republic of Turkey, HE Süleyman Demirel. All ministers from the BSEC and Silk Road countries have been invited to attend by the Turkish Minister of Public Works and Settlement, H.E. Faruk Nafiz Özak. Invitations have been sent by the Turkish Director General of Highways, Mr. Cahit Turhan to his counterparts in other BSEC Member States. Detailed information about the conference, including its programme, is available at www.irfnet.org.

39. The representative of IRU stated that IRU is fully satisfied with the level of cooperation between IRU and BSEC after signing the MoU between these two organizations in 2006 and the visit of the Secretary General of BSEC PERMIS to the IRU Headquarters in 2007. IRU also informed the WG on its continuous support to developing Euro-Asian road transport linkages giving the examples of Vladivostok-Lisbon and Beijing-Brussels caravans in the past, as well as its New Euro-Asian Land Transport Initiative which will be implemented in 2007.

COOPERATION WITH THE BSEC SECTORAL DIALOGUE PARTNERS (BSPA, BINSA, BRASS, BSEC-URTA)

40. The representatives of the organizations having sectoral dialogue partnership with BSEC assured the Working Group that their associations will further contribute to the development of transport in the region. It was also stressed that the implementation of the MoU on reinforcement of cooperation among the transport-related NGOs, namely BASPA, BINSA, BRASS and BSEC-URTA signed on 24 November 2006 in Antalya, will improve coordination of their work in order to address the needs of transporters.

41. The representative of BSEC-URTA in his presentation “Overview of BSEC-URTA activities in 2006” drew attention to the need of elimination of non-physical barriers imposed to the road transport of goods. He stressed that such important issues as introducing of BSEC regional quota system of licenses, the International Vehicle Weight Certificate under Annex 8 of the 1982 Harmonization Convention of UNECE and the Visa issue under the BSEC Draft Agreement on Simplification of Visa Procedures for Professional Drivers Nationals of the BSEC Member States should be resolved within the implementation of the MoU on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region.

42. The representative of BASPA informed about the latest development of this association. He told that BASPA can play substantial role in renewal or establishing of passenger and ferry lines in the Black Sea thus making contribution to the development of the Euro-Asian linkages.

43. The representatives of BRASS and BINSA emphasized the importance of the finalization of the draft MoU of Recommendations in the Sphere of Development of shipbuilding, shiprepairing and shipping in the BSEC region at the Meeting of the Ad hoc Group of Experts to be held in Varna, on 12-13 April 2007. With reference to this, they asked the BSEC Member States to nominate the experts who will participate in the said meeting and to submit through BSEC

PERMIS their comments on the Draft, if any. The draft documents related to the Meeting are contained in the document file of the current meeting of the WG.

44. They also kindly asked the Working Group on Transport to devote one of its meetings to the issues of BSEC maritime transport (shipping, ports, shipbuilding, shiprepairing etc.).

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

45. The delegation of Turkey announced that the next Meeting of the Working Group will be held in Istanbul, on 3-4 July 2007, to be followed by the Meeting of Ministers of Transport on 5 July 2007 and invited the participants to the said meetings.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

46. The participants expressed their gratitude to the Serbian Chairmanship for the excellent organization of the Meeting and warm hospitality extended to them.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

47. The WG agreed that the date and venue of its next meeting would be communicated officially to the Member States through the BSEC Secretariat.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

48. The Working Group adopted the present Report for submission to the next Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials and the Sixteenth Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.
