



BS/TR/WG/R(94)1

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

(Istanbul, 2 - 3 June 1994)

1. The Meeting of the Working Group (WG) on Transport of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) was held in Istanbul on 2-3 June 1994.

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

Republic of Albania
Republic of Armenia
Republic of Azerbaijan
Republic of Bulgaria
Republic of Georgia
Republic of Greece
Romania
Russian Federation
Republic of Turkey
Ukraine

The Arab Republic of Egypt, Israel, Poland, the Slovak Republic and the BSEC Council attended the Meeting as observers.

The Meeting was also attended by the representatives of the European Commission and the Parliamentary Assembly of the BSEC, as guests.

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

3. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Ambassador Yaşar Yakıç, Deputy Undersecretary for Economic Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey.

4. The WG discussed and adopted the Draft Agenda of the Meeting. The Agenda as adopted by the WG is attached as Annex II.

5. The Chairman opened the debate with a statement of a general nature. *

I. GENERAL ISSUES

a) Data bank for the collection of information on transport issues

6. The WG reiterated the need for the Participating States to send information on transport issues to the Coordination Center for the Exchange of Statistical Data and Economic Information established within the Turkish State Institute of Statistics located in Ankara for the creation of a data bank accessible to all Participating States. The Turkish Delegation presented to the Meeting a questionnaire which could be helpful in determining what kind of data could be provided for the data bank to be established.

7. The WG decided that the Secretariat draft a questionnaire in light of views expressed during the discussions and circulate it to the Participating States for their comments and suggestions. The WG further decided that the Secretariat incorporate these comments and suggestions into the text and recirculate the incorporated text to the Participating States prior to the next Meeting of the WG. The WG agreed to assign the Secretariat to look into the possibility of the establishment of a data bank on a commercial basis.

b) Harmonization of the border crossing formalities of the Participating States

8. Recognizing its value as a substantial method of promoting trade within the BSEC area, the WG agreed upon the initiation of a study on the harmonization of border crossing formalities which should be regarded as a long-term process among the BSEC Participating States, and instructed the Secretariat to collect data from the Participating States on their existing border crossing formalities and prepare a study explaining the methodology to be followed for the further elaboration of this issue.

9. The WG expressed the opinion that the Participating States' becoming signatories to international agreements on transportation will contribute to harmonization with international standards and procedures as well as with the necessary documentation required for international and transit transport activities, and therefore invited those Participating States which have not yet signed such agreements to do so.

* This was the first Meeting of the WG on Transport. On the basis of the decision of the Third Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Sofia, December 1993), the Working Group on Transport and Communications was split into two working groups: one on transport, the other on communications.

II. INLAND TRANSPORTATION

a) The Black Sea Network Plan and the Ring Corridor Concept

10. With the contribution of the participating delegations on their national existing and planned transportation networks in relation to the Black Sea Ring, the WG further developed the Black Sea Network Plan with emphasis on the Ring Corridor Concept and its relevant accesses. The delegations also presented their views on how to overcome difficulties arising from area topography and limited financial resources.

b) The inclusion of links in existing or new transport corridors of the BSEC area

11. The WG also heard the explanations of the participating delegations on their preferred transportation links in relation to the Black Sea Network Plan. These explanations included data concerning freight and passenger demand as well as traffic flow of the Participating States.

c) Freight and passenger travel demand and the traffic flows in the BSEC countries

12. The WG decided that a detailed map be prepared for submission to its next meeting to incorporate the connections of the national transport infrastructures of the Participating States and the most preferred transport links, which takes into account the multimodal aspect for the above mentioned plan.

Taking into account the importance and complexity of this project, the WG decided to recommend that the next MMFA in Tbilisi may wish to consider the creation of an ad hoc Group of Experts to implement this task in cooperation with the BSEC Secretariat, which will draft the guidelines for the Group of Experts.

III. MARITIME TRANSPORTATION IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

a) Problems related to maritime traffic in the Straits

13. Under this subitem of the agenda, a thorough exchange of views regarding the problems related to maritime traffic in the Straits took place.

The WG, noting the Turkish concerns on the safety of navigation and the protection of the environment in the Straits, agreed that these problems should be addressed through international cooperation within the IMO, with due respect to the Montreux Convention and relevant international law.

The WG agreed that any national rules promulgated by the coastal states should respect the special regime of the Straits under the Montreux Convention and be in total conformity with the existing rules and recommendations of the IMO.

The majority of participating delegations supported the text contained in the present paragraph, but consensus could not be reached.

b) Recent developments in the shipping policies of the Participating States

14. In order to facilitate the compilation of the shipping policies of the Participating States with a view to establishing their common denominators towards a market oriented maritime environment, the WG instructed the Secretariat to undertake the preparation of a questionnaire in cooperation with the Participating States which will be distributed to them. The Participating States are invited to send to the Secretariat their answers at their earliest convenience.

c) Promotion of bilateral shipping agreements

15. The WG emphasized the importance of the promotion of bilateral shipping agreements based on the principle of free and fair competition among the Participating States and invited those countries which did not yet sign such agreements to do so. The WG instructed the Secretariat to draft, on the basis of the texts made available by the Participating States, a paper to be submitted to the subsequent meetings of the WG defining the guidelines which, if found acceptable by the respective authorities of the Participating States, could outline the rules governing the bilateral shipping practices among the Participating States.

d) Cooperation in the shipbuilding/ship repairing sectors of the Participating States

16. The delegations provided further information on the shipbuilding/ship repairing industry in their countries and elaborated on possible ways of cooperation in this field. The WG also dwelled upon measures to prevent the emergence of overcapacity in the shipbuilding industry and concluded that this problem should be resolved on a multilateral basis and on the basis of the rules of free competition. For the compilation of all the opportunities existing in this field within the BSEC area, the WG expressed the view that the assistance of the BSEC Council in this respect would be very much appreciated.

e) Technical cooperation in the fields of shipbuilding/ship repairing sectors of the Participating States

17. The WG discussed the subject of technical cooperation, and agreed to utilize the mechanism, created by the Working Group on Organizational Matters held in Istanbul on 7-9 March 1994, which provides for the authorities in charge of technical cooperation of the Participating States to establish contacts as frequently as the WG convenes. These contacts shall be within the scope of this WG, and would be instrumental in coordinating the activities in this field among donor and recipient countries with the active participation of the private sector of the Participating States.

f) Practical problems faced by the ships of the Participating States in each other's ports

18. The WG took note of the document prepared by the BSEC Council regarding the practical problems faced by ships when they call in the ports of the Participating

States as well as problems voiced by the delegations during the discussions. Following elaboration of the subject, the WG concluded that all necessary measures should be taken for the alleviation of these problems, and decided to recommend to the MMFA the endorsement of a resolution calling upon all Participating States to cooperate more closely on this important subject. Furthermore, the WG urged the Participating States to continue to send up-to-date information related to this issue to the Secretariat for distribution.

g) Exchange of information on existing and planned ferry lines in the Black Sea

19 Several delegations provided information to the WG regarding the ferry lines, existing and planned, between various ports of the BSEC region. The WG decided to continue the exchange of information on this subject in its forthcoming meetings.

h) Cooperation of the private sector for the materialization of maritime projects

20. The WG also elaborated on the ways and means of attracting the interest of the private sector to the broad opportunities of collaboration existing in the field of maritime transportation and ensuring access to a data bank of information. The WG pointed out that many projects await the exploitation of the private sectors of the Participating States, and these could be realized especially through joint ventures. The WG therefore called upon the BSEC Council to prepare a study reflecting the opportunities existing in the private sectors of the Participating States in this field.

IV. STUDY OF THE PLANNING OF AN OVERALL BSEC TRANSPORT NETWORK

21. Regarding the proposal of the Ukrainian Delegation submitted to the Chairman of the Meeting of the Working Group on Transport and Communications held in Athens on 23-24 November 1993 concerning its interest to undertake a study related to the planning of an overall BSEC transport network, the Ukrainian Delegation informed the WG that the study will be made available to the Secretariat at a later stage. An extensive discussion of this proposal took place in the WG. This discussion reflected the interest and support by the WG for the Ukrainian initiative to be carried out in parallel to the work of the Group of Experts referred to in paragraph 12 of the Report.

V. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

22. None of the delegations raised any questions under this item.

VI. EXPRESSION OF THANKS

23. The delegations expressed their sincere gratitude to the Turkish authorities for hosting the Meeting and for the warm hospitality extended to them.

VII. DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

24. The Participating States which may wish to host the next meeting of the WG on Transport will accordingly notify the Secretariat.

VIII. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

25. The WG adopted the present report for submission to the Fourth Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs.
