

ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION (BSEC)
ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE)

**JOINT BSEC-OSCE WORKSHOP ON
BEST PRACTICES AT BORDER CROSSINGS - A TRADE AND
TRANSPORT FACILITATION PERSPECTIVE**

Istanbul, BSEC Headquarters, 3 April 2013

Summary Proceedings

1. On 3 April 2013, the Joint BSEC-OSCE Workshop on “Best practices at border crossings – a trade and transport facilitation perspective” was held at the BSEC Headquarters.

The Workshop was organized as a sub-event of the BSEC Working Group on Customs Matters.

2. The session was opened by Mr. Gabriel LEONTE, Senior Economic and Environmental Officer, Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA), OSCE Secretariat. Welcoming remarks were made by:

- Ms. Hülya ERBAY, Deputy Director General for the EU and External Relations, Ministry of Customs and Trade of the Republic of Turkey, 2012-2014 Country Coordinator of the BSEC Working Group on Customs Matters;
- Ambassador Traian CHEBELEU, Deputy Secretary General, BSEC PERMIS;
- Mr. Roel JANSSENS, Economic Adviser/Project Manager, OCEEA, OSCE Secretariat; and
- Mr. Konstantin GLUKHENKIY, Economic Affairs Officer, Transport Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

3. The representatives of the following BSEC Member States attended the Workshop:

Republic of Albania
Republic of Armenia
Republic of Azerbaijan
Republic of Bulgaria
Georgia
Republic of Moldova

Russian Federation
Republic of Serbia
Republic of Turkey
Ukraine

4. The Workshop was attended by the representatives of the Arab Republic of Egypt, as the BSEC Observer, and BSEC-URTA, as the BSEC Sectoral Dialogue Partner.

5. The aim of the Workshop was to highlight key messages of the OSCE-UNECE Handbook of Best Practices at Border Crossings and identify possible action for border crossing facilitation among the BSEC Member States.

6. The Workshop was structured in two panel sessions on best practices at border crossings devoted, respectively, to the following topics:

- Making the case for a risk-based approach and making the case for enhanced inter-agency co-operation;
- Public Private Partnerships in border management.

7. During the two panel sessions, comprehensive presentations were submitted by:

- Mr. Theo HESSELINK, Technical Officer, Compliance and Facilitation Directorate, World Customs Organization (WCO);
- Ms. Tamar TSIKLARI, Senior Officer, Customs Department, Revenue Service/Ministry of Finance, Georgia;
- Mr. Konstantin GLUKHENKIY, Economic Affairs Officer, Transport Division, UNECE;
- Ms. Dijana ĐINĐIĆ, Head of EU Integration Section/International Customs Cooperation and EU Integration Department, Serbian Customs Administration;
- Ms. Didem DİRLİK, Head of Department, Directorate General for the EU and External Relations, Ministry of Customs and Trade of Turkey; and
- Ms. Sinem ŞENKAYA, External Relations Expert, Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB)/GTI.

8. The presentations were followed by discussions among the participants. From the informal discussion that took place, several ideas and conclusions were retained in support of the efforts of the Member States to adjust their border crossing procedures and train their staff to more effectively meet the challenges posed by the current trends of increased trade volume and complexity:

- The importance of an effective implementation of international legal instruments, tools and standards, including the WCO Revised Kyoto Convention, the UNECE International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods etc., was highlighted. In that context, calls were made on BSEC Member States who have not yet ratified these legal instruments to consider doing so.

- The need for increased inter-agency cooperation at national level was emphasized. Concepts such as Integrated Border Management, Coordinated Border Management or Collaborative Border Management were presented and discussed. In that context, it was highlighted that Integrated Border Management can also be achieved through mechanisms such as designation of a leading agency, delegation of authority to customs, etc.
- The need to strengthen cooperation between border management agencies bilaterally, regionally as well as internationally was stressed.
- A regional conference with the participation of all national agencies involved in border management (i.e. customs, border police, veterinary and fito-sanitary authorities, etc.) could be considered, with the aim of enhancing interagency co-operation at both national and regional level.
- Governments need to find an optimal balance between security and trade facilitation. In that context, it was stressed that it is neither possible nor necessary to control every single transaction or operation.
- A risk-based management approach should be adopted, which allows to distinguish compliant and legitimate business from potentially non-compliant traders.
- A well functioning risk based approach requires efforts to overcome the ‘control mentality’, as well as educating both the customs officers and traders.
- A risk based approach in border management also goes hand in hand with the introduction of a well functioning authorized economic operator programme.
- Public private partnership in border management is possible, as demonstrated by the Turkish example, which involves “build-operate-transfer method” and it is a win-win solution both for the governments and the private sector.
- The OSCE-UNECE Handbook of best practices at border crossings – a trade and transport facilitation perspective was recognized as a useful tool to tackle the above mentioned issues.
- The OSCE, BSEC, as well as other partners such as the WCO and UNECE were encouraged to continue such cooperation.

9. The participants thanked to the BSEC PERMIS, the OSCE and the Republic of Turkey as the Country Coordinator of the WG on Customs Matters, and agreed to submit the above mentioned ideas and conclusions to the Working Group on Customs Matters for further consideration.
