



BS/HP/WG/R(96)1

**REPORT OF THE
MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON
HEALTH CARE AND PHARMACEUTICS**

Tbilisi, 4-5 June 1996

1. The first Meeting of the Working Group (WG) on Health Care and Pharmaceutics of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) was held on 4-5 June 1996 in Tbilisi, Georgia.
2. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Amiran GAMKRELIDZE, Deputy Minister of Health of Georgia.
3. The Meeting was attended by the following Participating States of the BSEC:
 - Republic of Albania
 - Republic of Armenia
 - Republic of Azerbaijan
 - Republic of Bulgaria
 - Georgia
 - Hellenic Republic
 - Republic of Moldova
 - Russian Federation
 - Republic of Turkey
 - Ukraine
4. The representatives of Israel and the BSEC Business Council (BSEC BC) attended the Meeting as Observers.
5. The Meeting was also attended by the representatives of the World Health Organization and UNICEF as guests.

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

6. H.E. Mr. Avtandil JORBENADZE, Minister of Health of Georgia made an inaugural statement. The text of the statement is attached as Annex II.

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

CONSIDERATION OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE WORKING GROUP

8. Under agenda item 2, the delegations from the Participating States considered and approved the Terms of Reference of the Working Group on Health Care and Pharmaceuticals elaborated by the PERMIS in cooperation with the WHO.

The said document, as approved, is attached as Annex IV.

9. Under this agenda item, the WG also had a thorough exchange of views on the background paper prepared by the Ministry of Health of Georgia containing the Plan of Actions for the Working Group and agreed that the proposed document (attached as Annex V) could be used with an aim of determining the priority issues and problems as well as the means and ways of cooperation within the frame of the WG activities.

10. The WG further agreed that implementation of the Plan of Actions at the initial stage of developing cooperation would require the following prerequisites:

- Health insurance

10.1. The WG welcomed the initiative of the Georgian delegation to prepare for the consideration at the next meeting a study on the health insurance services in the region in collaboration with all the interested parties and on the basis of the information provided by the participants through the BSEC Secretariat.

The aim of the study is to elaborate a legislative basis for interactions between the medical and insurance agencies of the States of the BSEC region.

- Joint measures against infectious diseases

10.2. The WG expressed the opinion that direct exchange of information on the subject among the participants should be intensified and channeled in accordance with the internationally accepted Rules, as well as the respective Agreements concluded.

- Combating drug addiction

10.3. The WG welcomed the forthcoming Meeting of the BSEC Ministers of Internal Affairs expecting that common legal and administrative measures against illegal trafficking of drugs would be elaborated.

10.4. The participants agreed that exchange of information and direct contacts among the respective national health authorities dealing with the said problems should be organized on a regular basis with an aim of elaborating a common approach.

- Pharmaceutics

10.5. The WG came to the conclusion that the prospects of cooperation in the field of pharmaceutics should be considered by the next WG meeting as a separate agenda item.

10.6. The WG would welcome any efforts of the States of the region with regard to establishing direct contacts and information exchange among the relevant national bodies.

- Scientific research, education and training programs

10.7. The WG agreed that the said area of collaboration would require establishment of a coordinating body and creation of a data bank.

10.8. The WG called upon the participants to exchange on a regular basis information regarding the research and applied workshops and conferences held on the subject in their respective countries.

- Disasters medicine

10.9. The WG agreed on the necessity of the coordinated action of the States during emergency situation in one of the countries or a group of countries of the region.

10.10. The WG further agreed that in this respect a special BSEC body should be established in the future for coordination of all the activities in the region in case of natural disasters, industrial and other catastrophes.

- Protection of the vulnerable groups

10.11. The WG called upon the Participating States to join their efforts in providing medical services for vulnerable groups of population and in particular in the areas of ethnic conflicts, civil wars, etc. including the elaboration of joint projects on medical and psycho-social rehabilitation.

10.12. In this respect the WG stressed the importance of coordinating actions of the national governments of the BSEC with regard to protection and assistance for vulnerable groups.

- Health resort

10.13. The WG came to the conclusion that this issue should be further developed by the States in close cooperation with other BSEC Subsidiary Bodies, in particular with WG on Tourism and WG on Environmental Protection.

EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION CONCERNING THE SITUATION IN THE FIELD OF HEALTH CARE AND PHARMACEUTICS IN THE REGION

11. On the basis of the national reports presented by the Participating States the participants exchanged information and views regarding the situation in the said field in the BSEC region.

12. The delegations informed each other of the health care reforms carried on in their respective countries as well as of the plans concerning the pharmaceutical industries' development and the prospects for multilateral cooperation in the area of health care and pharmaceuticals.

13. During the discussion special attention has been devoted to the problems related to the medical care in the States in emergency situation (natural calamities, epidemic diseases, conflicts, refugees, etc.)

14. Having recognized the importance of exchanging information on the situation in health care and pharmaceuticals in the individual countries for facilitating cooperative links in the region in the said field the WG recommended this item be included in the agenda of the subsequent WG meetings.

15. It was further recommended that the relevant official publications of the BSEC Participating States should be more widely utilized for this purpose.

REGIONAL PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS TO BE REALIZED WITHIN THE BSEC

- Developing regional cooperation

16. Under this agenda item a thorough exchange of views took place on the prospects of developing cooperation in the region in the field of health care and pharmaceuticals with the aim of improving the health conditions for the population.

17. The WG expressed the view that the pollution of the Black Sea poses serious threats to the coastal states and efforts being undertaken by the respective national authorities are not sufficient for improving the health conditions of their population.

18. To this end the WG called upon the BSEC Governments to take urgent measures to protect public health by not-to-be delayed construction and modernizing of sewage

systems as well as of drinking-water treatment facilities, in particular in the areas where the local population is at real risk.

- Regional programs and projects

19. Having considered concrete project proposals for cooperation in the discussed field the WG expressed its appreciation for the efforts of their authors and recommended that the identification studies on each proposal should be undertaken by interested parties in order to further develop them.

20. It was agreed that the said studies when completed, be forwarded to the BSEC Secretariat with regard to specify possible material sources for supporting the projects.

21. The WG welcomed the proposal of the BSEC Business Council towards the creation of an inventory of firms producing pharmaceuticals and medical equipment in the BSEC Participating States, with the aim of furthering commercial cooperation among themselves, as well as identifying the enterprises that could attract foreign investors.

22. The WG requested that the BSEC Business Council prepare a questionnaire to be distributed to the Participating States through the BSEC PERMIS by 1 September 1996, with the purpose of collecting the information that will serve as a basis for this inventory which could offer concrete cooperation possibilities for the international business community.

- Creation of the Black Sea Medical Association

23. The WG welcomed the idea put forward by the Turkish delegation regarding the creation of the Black Sea Medical Association (BSMA).

24. Having appreciated the efforts of the authors regarding the elaboration of the basic documents for the BSMA the WG agreed that the States interested in this project could forward their comments to the above documents to the Secretariat preferably by 1 November 1996 so that this subject can be discussed in detail at the next meeting.

- Collaboration with the World Health Organization

25. Having agreed on the importance of practical links with the World Health Organization (WHO) in developing health care and pharmaceutical spheres in the region the WG recommended that the present Report be forwarded to the WHO.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

26. The WG welcomed the initiative of Georgia supported by other BSEC States to hold in Tbilisi under the BSEC auspices the International Symposium on Reconstructive and Plastic Surgery (22-25 April 1997) and the International Conference on Disaster and

Critical Care Medicine (October 1997) and invited all the countries to participate in them.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

27. The WG expressed its sincere gratitude to the Government of Georgia for the hospitality extended to the national delegations and for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

28. The WG agreed that the next meeting would take place in February-March 1997. The Participating State which may wish to host the next meeting will notify the Secretariat to that effect.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

29. The WG adopted the present report for submission to the Eighth Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs.
