

STATEMENT

OF THE HEADS OF CUSTOMS ADMINISTRATIONS
OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

(Kyiv, 18 March 2008)

We, the High Representatives of the Customs Administrations of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) met in Kyiv on 18 March 2008, within the framework of the Ukrainian BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office, and;

Bearing in mind that BSEC, throughout its fifteen years of existence, has endeavoured to bring its Members together guided by common ideas, goals and principles;

Taking into account that the BSEC region, with its unique geographical location, possesses a strategic importance in connecting Europe and Asia;

Believing that after fifteen years of experience, BSEC shall take concrete steps and achieve tangible results in the areas of cross-border cooperation and trade facilitation, which in turn will open up the potential of the region;

Being determined to make every effort for progress in cooperation between customs administrations and to create a favourable environment for initiating joint projects and programmes of common interest;

Taking into consideration the continuously growing trade turnover in the BSEC region;

Recognizing that the role of customs administrations should evolve to take into account the changes which have occurred during recent years, including the increasing importance of securing the international trade supply chain;

Being conscious that it is necessary to ensure a correct balance between trade facilitation and the fight against fraud and other customs offences;

Emphasizing the need to conduct a target-oriented evaluation of various plans and studies pertaining to the border-crossing procedures in the BSEC Member States, including in joint cooperation with international and regional organizations and initiatives;

Acknowledging the necessity to intensify efforts for the facilitation of movements of goods within the BSEC region by simplifying customs formalities and reducing waiting times at the border crossing points;

Stressing the need and the importance of the implementation of the provisions of the Declarations of the BSEC Heads of State and/or Government and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States, as well as the Resolutions and Decisions adopted by the BSEC Councils;

Have agreed upon:

1. **Intensifying** joint efforts to promote cooperation among customs administrations of the BSEC Member States, in order to help to reduce regional disparities and to give an impetus to the regional trade;
2. **Strengthening** cooperation with relevant international organizations and structures in order to coordinate the activities in customs matters, while fully reflecting the interests of the Member States, through devising joint action plans and instituting appropriate coordination mechanisms with international organizations which would yield fruitful results for the region;
3. **Taking** appropriate measures to explore the possibilities for feasible and practical approach to further trade facilitation, eventually through concluding legal instruments that would lead to the gradual harmonization of customs procedures in the BSEC region;
4. **Strengthening** and further enhancing the cooperation of customs administrations, including through the assigning the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Cooperation in Customs Services the status of a permanent subsidiary organ;
5. **Promoting** the organization of regional training seminars and conferences aimed at the exchange of experiences and best practices in the customs sphere among experts of the BSEC Member States, other states and international organizations;
6. **Enforcing** the correct application of the legislation regarding the international trade which aims to assist at combating criminal or terrorist threats, eliminating health and safety risks for consumers, environmental risks, as well as risks to public security;
7. **Encouraging** the BSEC Observers, Dialogue and Sectoral Dialogue Partners and other interested organizations and institutions to offer their contributions to the implementation of the agreed measures and arrangements regarding the simplification of the customs formalities in the region;
8. **Ensuring** the implementation of the provisions of the Resolutions and Decisions of the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs related to facilitation and security of trade and cross-border cooperation;
9. **Encouraging** the continuation and further strengthening of BSEC cooperation with all relevant international organizations;
10. **Supporting and promoting** cross-border cooperation projects among the BSEC Member States wherever is possible to the benefit of the whole region.

The Participants expressed their gratitude to the Government and people of Ukraine for their warm hospitality and the outstanding organization of the Meeting.
