



BS/WG/CT/R(2018)1

**REPORT
OF THE MEETING
OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP
ON COOPERATION IN TOURISM**

Varna, the Republic of Bulgaria, 13 June 2018

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism (WGCT) was held in Varna, the Republic of Bulgaria, on 13 June 2018.
2. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Ivaylo PETKOV, Director of the International Cooperation and Investments in Tourism Directorate, Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria.
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
Romania
Russian Federation
Republic of Turkey
Ukraine

The List of Participants is attached as **Annex I** to the present Report.

AGENDA ITEM 1: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

4. The Draft Agenda of the Meeting was discussed and adopted. The Agenda, as adopted, is attached as **Annex II**.

AGENDA ITEM 2: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BSEC COUNCIL, AND THE FOLLOW-UP OF THE DECLARATIONS AND JOINT STATEMENTS ADOPTED BY THE MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF TOURISM OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

5. The Working Group took note of information provided by the BSEC PERMIS on the implementation of the Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations of the BSEC Council and the follow up of the Declarations and the Statements of the Ministers in charge of Tourism since the last Meeting of the Working Group (Burgas, 20 November 2017).

6. The Working Group was informed that, following the agreement reached between the two candidate Member States, Romania and the Republic of Turkey, the Republic of Turkey is presenting its candidacy for assuming the Country-Coordinatorship of the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism for the period from 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2020. Romania will present its candidacy for the same Country-Coordinatorship for the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2022.
7. The Working Group welcomed the agreement reached in this regard and agreed to submit the candidacy of the Republic of Turkey for the consideration of the Committee of Senior Officials at its next Meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 3: CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT DOCUMENTS (AGENDA AND JOINT DECLARATION) FOR THE MEETING OF MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF TOURISM OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES (VARNA, 14 JUNE 2018)

8. The Delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria informed on the arrangements for the Meeting of the Ministers in charge of Tourism of the BSEC Member States (Varna, 14 June 2018) and introduced the Draft Agenda and the Draft Joint Declaration for the said Ministerial Meeting.
9. The Working Group agreed on the Draft Agenda of the Ministerial Meeting and finalized the text of the Draft “*Joint Varna Declaration of the Ministers in charge of Tourism of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation*”. The Draft Agenda and the Draft Joint Declaration are attached as **Annex III** and **Annex IV** respectively.
10. The Working Group took note of the draft Report of the Ministerial Meeting, prepared by the BSEC PERMIS (attached as **Annex V**).

AGENDA ITEM 4: CONSIDERATION OF THE EVALUATION REPORT OF THE COUNTRY-COORDINATOR OF THE WORKING GROUP FOR THE PERIOD FROM 1 JULY 2016 TO 30 JUNE 2018

11. The Working Group considered and approved the Evaluation Report of the Country-Coordinator (Republic of Bulgaria) for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2018, which will be submitted to the BSEC Committee of Senior Officials. The Evaluation Report is attached as **Annex VI**.
12. The Working Group expressed its appreciation to the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria, as the Country-Coordinator, for the results achieved during the past two years.

AGENDA ITEM 5: ACTION TAKEN OR TO BE TAKEN WITH REGARD TO THE SPECIAL INTEREST TOURISM COOPERATION AREAS

13. The BSEC PERMIS presented brief information on the sub-items under this agenda item.

a) Gastronomy and Wine Tourism and b) Film-induced Tourism

14. The BSEC PERMIS proposed to the Republic of Bulgaria and the Hellenic Republic to consider elaborating project proposals on collection and divulgation of data on gastronomy and wine tourism as well as on film-induced tourism, respectively, which can be submitted for funding to the Steering Committee of the Black Sea Project Promotion Facility.
15. The President of the Federation of Restaurateurs and Hoteliers of Russia delivered a presentation on the “*Black Sea Cuisine – Development and Promotion Program*” (attached as **Annex VII**) and invited relevant institutions of BSEC Member States to join the project and reflect on the possibilities for funding it.
16. The BSEC PERMIS, given the similarity in the objectives, proposed to merge this Project with the Project on “*Gastronomic and Wine Tourism*”, in order to submit it for funding to the Steering Committee of the Black Sea Project Promotion Facility.

c) Maritime, Nautical and Cruise Tourism

- **Preparation of an International Conference on Attracting Cruise Tourism in the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean**

17. The Working Group took note of the updated information, provided by the BSEC PERMIS, on the preparations for *the International Conference on Attracting Cruise Tourism in the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean*, to be jointly organized with the UNWTO and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey, in spring of 2019 (TBC) in Istanbul. In view of the importance of the event, the BSEC Member States are invited to actively participate in the preparation and the proceedings of the Conference.

d) Training in the field of Tourism

18. Since no new information was received on the proposal on the *University Environment Integration for Specialist Training in Tourism Sphere of the Black Sea Region*, the Working Group agreed to remove it from its Agenda.
19. The Working Group reiterated its earlier call to the BSEC Member States to convey to the BSEC PERMIS concrete proposals for training in the field of tourism proposed by the UNWTO affiliated Tourism Training Center of Bogazici University of Istanbul.
20. The Working Group took note of information provided by the BSEC PERMIS on its activities regarding the preparation of *a Seminar on “How to More Effectively Attract Chinese and Indian Tourists to the BSEC Region”*, to be jointly organized with the UNWTO, in Istanbul in 2019 (TBC).

e) Cultural Routes/Cultural Tourism Projects

21. The Working Group proposed to consider the possibility of organizing, in the first semester of 2019, a Joint Meeting with the Working Group on Culture, to consider issues of shared interest. The BSEC PERMIS was requested to undertake further consultation on the issue and report back at the next meeting of the Working Group.

AGENDA ITEM 6: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE BSEC AND THE UNWTO

(i) Silk Road Projects

22. The Working Group took note of updated information provided by the BSEC PERMIS on its cooperation with the UNWTO for the implementation of the latter's Silk Road Programme.
23. The Working Group reiterated its earlier call to the relevant authorities of the BSEC Member States to elaborate concrete proposals on *the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Project* and also to contribute to *the Western Silk Road Tourism Development Initiative*, as well as *the Western Silk Road Heritage Map* within the UNWTO Silk Road Programme.
24. The representative of the Hellenic Republic informed on the Concept Proposal on the Silk Road "*Bazaar – Agora: Experiencing Traditional Markets along the Silk Road Markets of the BSEC Countries*", with the aim to create an alternative way to experience Silk Road destinations (attached as **Annex VIII**).

(ii) Collection, Analysis and Interpretation of Data on Tourism of BSEC Member States

25. The Working Group supported the activities of the BSEC PERMIS aimed at collection, analysis and interpretation of data on Tourism of BSEC Member States, in collaboration with UNWTO.

AGENDA ITEM 7: ANY OTHER BUSINESS

26. The Working Group expressed its appreciation to the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria for the warm hospitality and the excellent organization of the Meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 8: ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

27. The Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism adopted the present Report and submitted it for consideration to the next Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials of the BSEC Member States.

**MEETING OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP
ON COOPERATION IN TOURISM**

Varna, Republic of Bulgaria, 13 June 2018

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

<u>CHAIRMAN</u>	<u>NAME / SURNAME</u>	<u>TITLE / POSITION / INSTITUTION</u>	<u>TEL / FAX NUMBERS / E-MAIL</u>
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**MEETING OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP
ON COOPERATION IN TOURISM**

Varna, Republic of Bulgaria, 13 June 2018

AGENDA

1. Adoption of the Agenda.
2. Implementation of the Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations of the BSEC Council, and the follow-up of the Declarations and Joint Statements adopted by the Ministers in charge of Tourism of the BSEC Member States.
3. Consideration of draft documents (Agenda and Joint Declaration) for the Meeting of Ministers in charge of Tourism of the BSEC Member States (Varna, 14 June 2018).
4. Consideration of the Evaluation report of the Country-Coordinator of the Working Group for the period from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2018.
5. Action taken or to be taken with regard to the Special Interest Tourism cooperation areas:
 - a) Gastronomy and Wine Tourism;
 - b) Film-induced Tourism;
 - c) Maritime, Nautical and Cruise Tourism:
 - Preparation of an International Conference on Attracting Cruise Tourism in the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean;
 - d) Training in the field of Tourism;
 - e) Cultural routes / cultural tourism projects.
6. Implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding between the BSEC and the UNWTO:
 - Silk Road projects;
 - Collection, analysis and interpretation of statistical data on Tourism of BSEC Member States.
7. Any other business.
8. Adoption of the Report of the Meeting.

**MEETING
OF THE MINISTERS
IN CHARGE OF TOURISM
OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES**

Varna, Republic of Bulgaria, 14 June 2018

DRAFT AGENDA

1. Adoption of the Agenda.
2. Opening statements by the Chairperson of the Meeting and by the Secretary General of the BSEC PERMIS.
3. Promotion of Tourism cooperation among the BSEC Member States - statements by the Heads of Delegations.
4. Consideration and adoption of the Joint Declaration of the Ministers in charge of Tourism of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.
5. Any other business.
6. Adoption of the Report of the Meeting.

**DRAFT JOINT VARNA DECLARATION
OF THE MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF TOURISM
OF THE MEMBER STATES OF THE ORGANIZATION
OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION**

(Varna, Republic of Bulgaria, 14 June 2018)

We, the Ministers in charge of Tourism / Heads of the Tourism Administrations of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), met on 14 June 2018 in Varna,

Reaffirming the commitment of the BSEC Member States to strengthening their ties in the field of Tourism, as a significant area of cooperation among the BSEC Member States since the very inception of the BSEC,

Recalling the Declaration of the Ministers of Tourism or Heads of Delegations of the BSEC Member States (Tirana, 2002), the Rhodos Declaration of the Ministers of Tourism of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (Rhodos, 2005), the Athens Declaration of the Ministers in charge of Tourism of the BSEC Member States (Athens, 2010), the Declaration of the Ministers in charge of Tourism of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (Kyiv, 2013), the Declaration of the Ministers in charge of Tourism of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (Athens, 2014), the Joint Declaration of the Conference of the Ministers in charge of Culture and Tourism of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (Sochi, 2016), and taking note of the activities of the *BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism*,

Guided by the “*BSEC Economic Agenda: Towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership*”, adopted in 2012, in particular its Goal 8 “*Development of Tourism and Protection of Cultural Heritage*”,

Recognizing the importance of sustainable Tourism in promoting economic development, investments, mutual understanding, cultural exchange, goodwill and close relations among peoples,

Emphasizing the need to explore in a systematic way the potential of the Region by developing joint innovative projects and organizing international Tourism events in the BSEC Member States that would pave the way for further Tourism exchanges among them,

Taking into consideration the *Memorandum of Understanding* concluded between the Organization of BSEC and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in Athens in 2014,

Recalling the approval of the Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics by the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) on 15 September 2017 in Chengdu, People’s Republic of China;

Affirming the necessity to enrich and diversify Tourism products and to add value to Tourism services offered in the BSEC Member States in order to attract tourists from within and outside the region and meet their needs, by putting forward the rich natural and cultural – tangible and intangible - heritage of the BSEC Member States,

Wishing to encourage the development of Special Interest Tourism forms in the BSEC Member States,

Taking note that, according to UNWTO data, the BSEC Region represents 14% of Europe's economy and that it received 129 million international tourist arrivals or 10 % of total arrivals worldwide, earned USD 66 billion or 5% of global receipts,

Taking also note of the recent encouraging positive trends in Tourism in the BSEC Region,

We declare our intention to:

1. *Work* together in the framework of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation to strengthen and bolster Tourism cooperation among the BSEC Member States, as it can help boost Tourism flows between destinations to make sustainable Tourism one of the major drivers of socio-economic development in the BSEC Region.

2. *Encourage* the Ministries and/or National Authorities in charge of Tourism in the BSEC Member States to better coordinate their actions in order to position the BSEC Region as an attractive multi-destination Tourism area, *inter alia*, by:

a) maximizing valuable cultural and environmental resources of the BSEC Member States by investing in the development of multi-destination Tourism products and routes, focusing on experiences rather than places;

b) joining efforts in order to strengthen connectivity among the BSEC Member States and other markets, by air, land, rivers and sea, highlighting the importance of a closer coordination between Tourism and transport policies;

c) promoting policies aimed at easing visa procedures and other travel facilitation, in accordance with relevant national legislation and international engagements, which would allow visitors from within and outside the BSEC region to move freely towards and within the region in order to increase international tourist arrivals and expenditure;

d) exploring the possibilities for future cooperation, particularly by exchanging best practices and sharing experiences on key aspects of travel Tourism among the BSEC Member States, particularly between mature destinations and emerging ones;

e) considering greater use of current technology advances and the rise of Digital Tourism, modern marketing tools, such as social media and mobile technologies;

f) considering also ways and means of boosting Cruise Tourism in the wider Black Sea area;

g) encouraging the implementation of Cultural Tourism / Cultural Routes projects in the BSEC Region and, in this context, supporting the proposal on the establishment of an institution called the "Cultural Port of the Black Sea" and the development of new Silk Road projects.

3. *Enhance* the regional dimension of the cooperation in the field of Tourism among the BSEC Member States, *inter alia*, by:

a) further developing gastronomic and Wine Tourism as well as Film-Induced Tourism, in a sustainable way, as high-value forms of Special Interest Tourism, along with other forms of niche Tourism, such as Agro-Tourism, Rural and Cultural Tourism, Wellness and Spa Tourism;

b) exploring the possibility of establishing a network and partnerships among regional or national, public or private organizations, professional associations and educational institutions from the BSEC Member States, which are involved in promoting gastronomic and Wine Tourism in their regions/countries, in order to allow the exchange of know-how and best practices;

c) promoting transnational cooperation on joint Tourism projects on gastronomic and wine tour itineraries in the BSEC Region, in order to strengthen the national and regional gastronomic identity and culinary culture, including the creation of a BSEC website for the promotion of Wine Tourism in all interested Member States;

d) exploring possibilities for developing joint projects and joint marketing campaigns in the field of sustainable Tourism;

e) considering the possibility of encouraging the development of joint educational and training programmes and projects in the overall Tourism sector.

4. *Consider* ways of effective implementation of the *Memorandum of Understanding between BSEC and UNWTO*, signed in Athens on 23 October 2014, with a view to promoting collaboration on concrete projects between the two Organizations.

5. *Instruct* the *BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism* to follow-up on the progress and the implementation of the provisions of the present Declaration.

6. *Reaffirm* our commitment to strengthen the cooperation and develop synergies with the BSEC Related Bodies, international and regional organizations and initiatives as well as with non-governmental organizations, as such partnerships and synergies offer additional value and strength to our Organization and increase the potential of the BSEC Region in the field of Tourism.

We agree to meet, whenever appropriate, to follow-up on the decisions taken and to consider the matters related to Tourism cooperation among the BSEC Member States.

We express our gratitude to the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria for the excellent organization of the Meeting and for the warm hospitality extended.

Varna, 14 June 2018



Annex V to BS/WG/CT/R(2018)1

**DRAFT REPORT
OF THE MEETING OF THE MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF TOURISM
OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES**

Varna, Republic of Bulgaria, 14 June 2018

1. The Meeting of the Ministers in charge of Tourism of the BSEC Member States was held in Varna, the Republic of Bulgaria, on 14 June 2018.
2. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Mrs. Nikolina ANGELKOVA, Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria.
3. The following BSEC Member States attended the Meeting:
 - Republic of Albania
 - Republic of Armenia
 - Republic of Azerbaijan
 - Republic of Bulgaria
 - Hellenic Republic
 - Romania
 - Russian Federation
 - Republic of Turkey
 - Ukraine
4. The following BSEC Related Body attended the Meeting:
 - Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC).
5. The Representative of the Parliament of the Republic of Bulgaria attended the Meeting as a Guest.
6. The List of Participants is attached as **Annex I**.
7. The Draft Agenda of the Meeting was discussed and adopted. The Agenda, as adopted, is attached as **Annex II**.
8. Opening statements were delivered by H.E. Mrs. Nikolina ANGELKOVA, Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria, and H.E. Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES, Secretary General of the BSEC PERMIS. The statements are attached as **Annex III** and **Annex IV**, respectively.

9. The Heads of Delegations delivered their national statements reflecting the Agenda items.
10. The Secretary General of PABSEC and the Representative of the Parliament of the Republic of Bulgaria also delivered statements.
11. The Heads of Delegations of the BSEC Member States adopted “*The Joint Varna Declaration of the Ministers in charge of Tourism of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (Varna, 14 June 2018)*”. The Joint Declaration is attached as **Annex V**.
12. The Participants expressed their gratitude to the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria for the excellent organization of the Meeting and for the warm hospitality extended.
13. The Participants adopted the Report of the Meeting of the Ministers in charge of Tourism of the BSEC Member States and decided to present it to the next Meeting of the Council of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States (Yerevan, 27 June 2018).

**EVALUATION REPORT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA,
A COUNTRY-COORDINATOR OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP ON TOURISM,
ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION
FOR A PERIOD OF 1 JULY 2016 - 30 JUNE 2018**

The present Evaluation Report was prepared in accordance with the **Council's Resolution "Monitoring the implementation of the Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations approved by the BSEC Council of Ministers"**.

The Evaluation Report corresponds to para III.1.3 of the BSEC Economic Agenda: Towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership related to the close monitoring the implementation of the provisions of the Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations approved by the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, as well as the Declarations adopted at the meetings of the Heads of State and Government, Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and sectoral ministers of the Member States and evaluating the existing challenges and the possible steps that could be taken to support and facilitate the implementation process, where applicable.

Following the invitation to the BSEC Member States to assume coordination of the relevant subsidiary organs, which was made by the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States at its 34th Meeting in Sochi on 1st July 2016, the Republic of Bulgaria was appointed as the Country-Coordinator of the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism as of 1 July 2016 for a period of two years.

Bulgaria presented the Draft Plan of Action of the BSEC Working Group on Tourism for the period 1 July 2016 - 30 June 2018 to the Meeting of the WG at the BSEC Headquarters on 21st November 2016. Adopted by the Working Group, the Action Plan set the main guidelines for enhancing mutually beneficial cooperation on tourism between the BSEC Member States, which meet economic, social and environmental needs of the peoples of the Black Sea Region.

Respectively, during the said period the Working Group was guided by:

1. The Charter of BSEC;
2. The Resolutions of the 34th Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States (Sochi 1st July 2016);
3. The Joint Declaration of the Ministers in charge of Culture and Tourism (Sochi, 23rd June 2016);
4. Decisions of the Working Group at its Meetings in the BSEC Headquarters on 21st November 2016; Burgas, Bulgaria, 20th November 2017; Varna, Bulgaria, 13th June 2018;
5. Meeting of the Ministers in Charge of Tourism of BSEC Member States (Varna, Bulgaria, 14th June 2018).

The Working Group continued the practice of exchanging information regarding tourism national strategies and possible joint projects, in particular, on development of gastronomy and wine tourism in the Black Sea Region, development of University Environment Integration for Specialist Training in Tourism Sphere in the Black Sea Region, development of cultural routes / cultural tourism projects, development of film-induced tourism, development of cruise tourism etc.

During the country-coordinatorship mandate, Bulgaria met a few challenges in regards of organizing the Working Group meetings. As declared in the Plan of Action of the WG, Bulgaria planned to organize a meeting in Varna, Bulgaria, on 20th April 2017. However, due to insufficient participation confirmations from the BSEC Member States, the Working Group Meeting was cancelled.

Due to the good cooperation with BSEC PERMIS, Bulgaria had a very fruitful coordinatorship. During the Working Group Meeting which took place in BSEC Headquarters on 21 November 2016, the attending BSEC Member States discussed possibilities of developing the cruise tourism in the Black Sea Region, enhancing the cooperation in the field balneo&SPA tourism and film-induced tourism, cultural tourism and others. A total of 7 representatives of the BSEC Member States attended the Meeting – the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Hellenic Republic, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Turkey and Ukraine, each actively participating in the discussions.

During the Working Group Meeting which took place in Burgas, Bulgaria, on 21st November 2017, the cooperation in the field of tourism between the BSEC Member States has been strengthened, a concrete projects and initiatives in the field of gastronomy and wine tourism and film-induced tourism have been discussed. A representative from UNWTO also attended the meeting and played an active role in the BSEC-UNWTO relation taking into account the Memorandum of Understanding between the two Organizations. A total of 8 BSEC Member States representatives attended the meeting – the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Bulgaria, the Hellenic Republic, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and Ukraine, each actively participating in the discussions.

During the Working Group Meeting which took place in Varna, Bulgaria, on 13th June 2018, the attending BSEC Member States mainly focused on finalizing the draft *Joint Varna Declaration of the Ministers in Charge of Tourism of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation*, which was adopted during the *Meeting of the Ministers in Charge of Tourism of the BSEC Member States*.

On 14th June 2018 in Varna, as a concluding event of Bulgaria's mandate as a Country-Coordinator of the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism, a Meeting of the Ministers in Charge of Tourism of the BSEC Member States was organized jointly with the BSEC PERMIS. The attending representatives of the BSEC Member States declared their intention to work together

in order to strengthen and bolster tourism cooperation among the BSEC Member States. The main topics of discussion were:

- development of multi-destination tourism products and routes, focusing on experiences rather than places;
- strengthening connectivity among the BSEC Member States and other markets;
- the implementation of Cultural tourism / Cultural routes projects in the Black Sea Region;
- promoting transnational cooperation on joint projects on gastronomic and wine tour itineraries in the BSEC Region;
- development of cruise tourism in the Black Sea and in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Side events in the field of tourism attended by the BSEC PERMIS high-level representatives:

On 30th December 2016 the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria organized jointly with UNWTO the first of its kind *International Congress on World Civilizations and Creative Tourism*. The Congress was an excellent platform and unique opportunity for public and private tourism stakeholders to present and share views, experiences and good practices in developing strategies that encourage and facilitate new and innovative forms of cultural tourism. The Secretary General of the BSEC PERMIS H.E. Michael B. CHRISTIDES participated in a Ministerial Meeting during the event. High-level representatives of some BSEC Member States, also actively participated in the event.

On 13th February 2018 the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria organized a High-level Meeting of the Ministers of Tourism of the EU Member States - *Tourism and Economic Growth*. This was the main event in the field of tourism during the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of EU. The Ministerial Meeting focused on the exchange of constructive ideas and proposals for the development of the tourism sector and advance cooperation in the field and the role of tourism industry as a sustainable factor for economic growth, regional integration and peace. The Secretary General of the BSEC PERMIS H.E. Michael B. CHRISTIDES actively participated in the as a panelist and an official guest.



BLACK SEA CUISINE

Development and Promotion Program

Igor Bukharov, Vladimir Bakanov

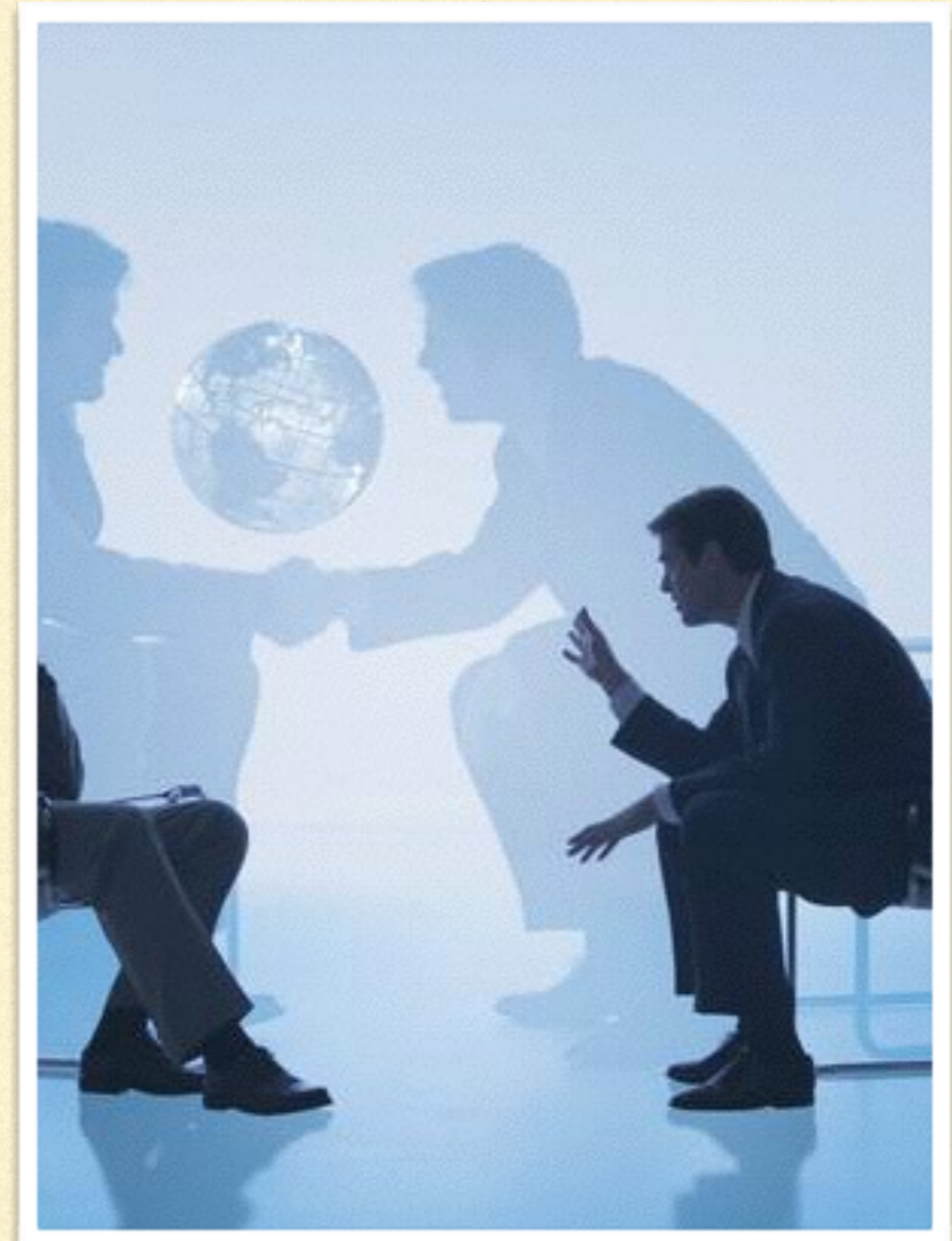
Varna, Bulgaria, 13.06.2018



BLACK SEA CUISINE Development & Promotion Program

initiated and conducted by

Federation of restaurateurs and
hoteliers of Russia (FRIO)





BLACK SEA CUISINE CONCEPT BACKGROUND

- Idea of BSC was initiated by FRIO in 2007 just after IOC select Sochi for 2014 Olympic games
- 2008 - 2013 Years of discussions and agreements
- 2014 An expert group of FRIO had been set up and start research and data base conduction
- 2016 Official discussions at round tables at Sochi wine Forum (June 30) and Yaroslavl Gastronomic Forum (August 19)
- 2017 International Presentation of BSC Concept at Gastronomist (September 23) in Istanbul, Turkey
- November 20, 2017 notes about BSC Concept at BSEC Working Group, Burgas, Bulgaria



RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

- Problems discovered:
- Research of world best cuisines ratings conducted in 2014-2017 shows that no one of Black Sea Coast countries cuisine are in TOP-30 and even in TOP-50
- Exception is Turkish cuisine which in a few ratings seldom achieved TOP-30 and even TOP-20
- Black Sea Cuisine as a separate category of Cuisine do not exist in consumer mind and on a paper
- No one of respondents researched in Russia, Turkey and Bulgaria could explain what Black Sea Cuisine mean and which dishes it includes



OPPORTUNITY

- Black Sea Coast Countries have common history and based on it common gastronomic culture with many similar products and dishes
- FRIO proposed to develop and promote BLACK SEA CUISINE as a separate category and marketed it as an Umbrella Brand which include most tasty dishes of all the Black Sea Coast countries
- It would require from all of Black Sea Coast countries cooperation instead of competition and consolidation of efforts instead of multidirectional actions
- Market Positioning should be based on Area of Origin instead of Country of Origin recognizing



OBJECTIVES

- Two main project objectives
- At 2020 Black Sea Cuisine should be formalized as separate category of world cuisines with clear architecture and definition of elements as a base for future umbrella brand
- At 2025 Black Sea Cuisine should permanently join in consumer mind TOP-15 most recognizable and preferable world cuisines
- In order to achieve the objectives FRIO developed the
- **BLACK SEA CUISINE DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION PROGRAM**



■ BLACK SEA CUISINE DEVELOPMENT & PROMOTION PROGRAM

- Roadmap of BSC DPP (short version - 7 points)
 - 1. Set up of an international organization for BCS DPP implementation
 - 2. Identification and definition of all Black Sea Cuisine dishes/products/wines and Data Base creation
 - 3. Selection of TOP-50 dishes and TOP-25 products for Common Black Sea Cuisine Menu
 - 4. Pairing of selected dishes/products with wines and recommendations set up.
 - 5. Selection of 5-7 dishes as a symbols of BSC for marketing purpose.
 - 6. Marketing plan conduction and raising funds for EU and worldwide BSC promotion.
 - 7. Marketing efforts implementation for BSC target perception in consumer mind.



UP TODAY IMPLEMENTATION

- 1. Legal working groups and Program representatives operate in Russia, Turkey and Bulgaria. FRIO in cooperation with TUR RUS Proje Geliştirme Derneği had signed agreements with several Turkish partners.
- 2. Experts group of FRIO conducting Data Base of BSC dishes/products where over 170 products already had been identified and defined. Representatives in Turkey and Bulgaria are involved.
- 3. Stand of Black Sea Cuisine at II Fest Turkey in Moscow (10-12 August). Black Sea Cuisine dinner in Istanbul (October). BSC round table in Bulgaria.



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CONCEPT PROPOSAL ON THE SILK ROAD

Bazaar – Agora: Experiencing traditional markets along the Silk Road Markets of the BSEC Countries

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The aim of this project is to develop a transnational product based on the common theme of the Silk Road Heritage. The geographic region of the BSEC Member States constitutes a “bridge” between Europe and Asia. The “UNWTO Silk Road Program” is considered to be of great importance for the BSEC Member States, due to the fact that almost all BSEC Members take part in the UNWTO Programme. This action will contribute to enhance the competitiveness of the tourism sector and, in particular, will improve promotion and visibility of unique Silk Road and transnational touristic products. Furthermore, the proposed concept will boost the mutual cultural understanding of the countries involved, through the highlighting of the high cultural value, that the Silk Road attractions possess.

SCOPE

The scope of the proposal is to create an alternative way to experience Silk Road destinations, focusing on the traditional markets, as an entry point to the cities and as a means of understanding and experiencing the local heritage, culture and gastronomy. In the past, the markets used to be the most lively areas of the cities, where merchants travelling along the whole Silk Road region, were constantly offering and buying typical products and artifacts from distant countries.

Furthermore, nowadays the markets may constitute the first approach to the destinations for the visitors, displaying its tangible and intangible heritage. The project aims at linking the goods offered in the markets to their culture, stories and creative industries, through experiential activities offered to tourists in the rest of the destination. Taking into account the strong cultural and historical links, the proposed project will create a network of destinations in all the BSEC countries, while joint promotion strategies will be taken up in order to strengthen the product’s visibility.

Countries Involved: All BSEC Countries: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine

Duration of the project: 18 Months

MAIN GOALS

- 1) To raise awareness (of tourists, tourism industry and local communities) on Silk Road attractions within the destinations.
- 2) To facilitate capacity building and product differentiation of the participating destinations, developing a new Silk Road related offer suitable to classic and new upward trending tourism markets (culture, gastronomy, handcraft, cruise, sailing...), in line with the latest trends on tourists' behavior and preferences, with the support of creative industries.
- 3) To foster cooperation in the tourism sector among the BSEC region, developing an appealing experiential product, sharing at the same time the costs occurring from the joint promotional project.
- 4) To increase the length of stay and expenditure of tourists in the participating destinations
- 5) To extend the tourism season in the participating destinations.
- 6) To favor the exchange of know – how concerning the sustainable tourism development.
- 7) To increase the cooperation and networking among local SMEs.
- 8) To benefit the local communities of the destinations, supporting economic growth and job creation.

INVOLVED STAKEHOLDERS – POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Local and international stakeholders will play a decisive role for the proper implementation of the project. Their potential role is described as follows:

- Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs): Setting the aforementioned proposal under the umbrella of an International or Regional Organizations such as UNWTO, UNESCO, BSEC, could help the development of the project through their granting of know – how and experience, especially through institutional initiatives related to the Silk Road (UNWTO Silk Road Programme, UNESCO Silk Road Online Platform, etc.)
- Ministries: Competent authorities in each country could play an important role to support the programme. Along with the NTOs (if existing), they could promote the project in their digital platforms and channels. Furthermore, their main role is to coordinate the efforts made by various stakeholders.
- Local Administration (Regional Authorities Local authorities, city halls, local professional chambers etc): They will help during the identification of the traditional markets, dealing with

regulations and providing the data which are necessary to the creation of the product (e.g. number of traditional markets in each city, number of merchants and traditional shops, identity of the goods sold within them, complementary Silk Road attractions).

- Universities and research bodies: Educational institutes may be involved in terms of support to the product offered (through internships and collaboration with university’s labs) and also in terms of research at first place at the initial phases of the projects.
- Associations of Tour Operators and Travel Agencies: TOs and TAs are fundamental distribution channels to spread and sell the product, especially at a local level, as they might be effectively involved in the forming of the product tourist package.
- Medias and Influencers (critics, journalists, bloggers, photographers, editors): They will be encouraged to take part of the project by experiencing the different activities and promote the destinations, reaching the defined targets (e.g.: cultural tourists, food lovers).

A SWOT Analysis is regarded as an essential tool for mapping the existing situation concerning the future creation of the product: the strengths and weaknesses the destinations have, the upcoming opportunities, referring to the activities of international organisations and the emergence of new target – markets, that might occur and could facilitate the proper development of the product, as well as the threats that appear and the involved stakeholders should take into consideration, in order to avoid possible distortions. In particular, the aforementioned information is described in the TABLE below as follows:

S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSAL

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Strong relations between the BSEC Countries. -The proposed Silk Road Countries cooperate in various IGOs (UNWTO, UNESCO, etc.) Emerging Silk Road related destinations ready to be explored. -Similar local identities and communities with mutual cultural awareness. -Silk Road is a global brand. -The existence of local products of high caliber and increasing demand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of International standards. -Easily replicable by competitors. - Low use of ITC practices. - Different lifecycle in the countries’ destinations.

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Strategic Reference Framework. - Emerging demand on maritime tourism. - Emerging long-haul source markets (e.g. China, Russia). - New target segments (Millennials, Generation Z). - Reverse competition into an attractive format. - Sustainable tourism awareness. - Actions taken under the UNWTO Silk Road Programme and the UNWTO Western Silk Road Initiative. - EU - China year of Tourism 2018. - European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018. - The increasing importance of ICTs nowadays. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fear of losing the local essence of social culture and environment, which could lead to commercialization of the markets. - The competition among neighboring destinations. - The global economy can be a threat to the small-scale producer. - Impact of tourism along with poor or ineffective management actions for less resistant and resilient destinations

PROJECT PHASES

PHASE 0: Inception phase

Objectives:

- Ensuring the smooth implementation of project activities
- Presenting the project idea to a different range of potential partners
- Enhance product awareness among stakeholders

Activities:

- ❖ Final decision for participations within the BSEC member-states by the BSEC PERMIS and “label” the project as a BSEC – SR Project
- ❖ Internal coordination and kick off meetings (BSEC and UNWTO)

PHASE 1: Research

Objectives:

- Deliver a research on Silk Road heritage concerning the Traditional Markets
- Setting up methodology of research, which could afterwards be used as a model for other countries
- Establishing an inventory of SR attractions and markets found in each country
- Define 3 or 4 SR-related traditional markets for each country for the pilot project

Activities:

- ❖ Setting up research team (up to max 8-10 people)
- ❖ Identification of research specific topics for each country, setting up criteria for the research
- ❖ Mapping and cataloguing of SR attractions and markets found in each countries
- ❖ Identify potential experiential activities

Phase 2: Product Development

Objective 1: Creating the basis for the development of the product through engagement of stakeholders and mapping of product components.

Activities:

- Develop participatory workshops with stakeholders to present and validate results from research and start defining the product
- Organization of B2B meetings
- Identification of tourism experiences available in pilot destinations and their providers (call and field visits). Experiences can be identified as follow:

Experiences A - at the market:

- Local market visits
- Product tasting
- Shopping
- Meeting the vendor: 5 senses experience

Experiences B - linked to the market but that could take place in other locations:

- Cooking classes
- Fruit/vegetable harvest (all seasons)
- Fishing in traditional boats
- Sailing/boat tours with storytelling and product tasting
- Handcraft labs
- Visit to traditional craftsman's workshops
- Guided tours to significance SR attractions / or cultural attractions
- Other activities related to festivals or SR heritage events

Objective 2: Creation of an integrated tourism experiential product characterized by authenticity, uniqueness, educational value, accessibility, capable to be a core community tourism attractor.

Activities:

- ❖ Setting up common standards among destinations to homogenize the product and make it suitable to modular formats
- ❖ Creation of themed itineraries related to Silk Road heritage (according to the outcomes of the research) starting from the markets and spreading in the rest of the destinations
- ❖ Info point in each market of each destination (in case of open air markets the info point will be arranged in a solution close to the market location) to present the Silk Road related products available and the related tourism experiences. In the info point there will also be the possibility to book the tourism experiences.

PHASE 3: Training and Capacity Building

Objectives:

- Assure the minimum of service quality and that the product meets the expectations and the requirements
- Enhancing Silk Road interpretation and quality guide and suppliers training addressed to tourism guides in the pilot destinations

Activities:

- ❖ Identify training needs and participants (who needs to be trained and on what)
- ❖ Identify trainers and develop training contents and materials
- ❖ Conduct trainings
- ❖ Carrying out the pilot tests

PHASE 4: Marketing & communication

Marketing and communication activities are needed to implement an effective integrated communications programme, providing universal access to all target communities on the community tourism policy. In particular, these are the proposed activities:

- Development of a common brand: Business & Audience Analysis, Visual imaging/logo development, launching & evaluating the brand.
- Creation of a dedicated website where all traditional markets are presented with their features, products and information. Moreover, the website should offer to users the information about and possibility to book tourism experiences related to each market, segmented according three different categories (gastronomy, handcraft and maritime activities) and the purchase of goods. Besides the languages of the partner destinations, the website would be better to be translated at least in the following languages, related to SR: English, French, German, Chinese and Arab. If the financing tool to be established enables certain initiatives, a further deepening of the project's impact could be achieved via the testing the user experience and technical functioning of the website. Within the website, the creation of a virtual tour of the market.
- Creation of an application for mobile devices displaying the contents of the website and with georeferentiation tools push, and augmented reality.
- Calendar of events for tourists: concerts playing traditional music within the market, photo exhibition within the markets concerning local culture and lifestyle.
- Dedicated B2B workshops and other events that will promote our projects to certain stakeholders, such as TOs (specialized niches), TAs specialized in school trips, Cruise companies, corporations that deal with the organization of professional events.
- Participating to big tourism platforms events (ITB Berlin, WTM London etc.).
- TV series.

- Organization of Fam/Press Trips: each destination should invite food bloggers, journalists that deal with culture, history and food. The primary aim is that they will get acquainted with the initiative-product and can be the link between the project and medias.
- Creation of Offline promotional contents: Brochures, maps, guides, etc.
- Creation of online contents: digital contents such as banners, which will target selected audiences, bloggers and travel influencers, storytelling techniques and collaborating with digital content providers. Social Media Promotion through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram. Organization of Online contests using social media official pages (On condition that the aforementioned financing tool enables such efforts.

GENERAL UNIQUE SELLING POSITIONS (USPs)

Discover the traditional markets that made the history of trades along the Silk Road and follow a new path to experience their cities.

USP #1

Black Sea markets, their history, architecture and stories. The multicultural influence that trade and travels had in the cities, the studios and shops of local artisans.

Assets:

City market, Local Architecture, buildings, Handcrafts, costumes, fabrics, shopping, Workshops and educational in artisan labs, Tradition and heritage

Market Segmentation – proposed targets:

- 1) European cultural tourists
- 2) Asian travelers from Silk Road countries
- 3) Asian new wave of tourists (experienced, etc.)
- 4) High school students (school trips)

USP #2

The gastronomy of Silk Road in the Black Sea Region presented in the markets, their most traditional location. A 5 senses immersion in the tastes and flavors of Silk Road food, experiencing the whole production cycle, from the harvest to the dish.

Assets:

Markets, Countryside activities (harvest, processing), Fishing activities Tasting, food-pairing and cooking sessions/classes

Market Segmentation – proposed targets:

- 1) Food lovers
- 2) Wine tourists
- 3) Agricultural Tourists
- 4) High school students (school trips)

USP #3

Follow the maritime route of the products that Silk Road merchants traded along the Black Sea Region.

Assets: Markets, Sailing boat excursions (with storytelling and tasting), boat rentals, Cruises, Fashion (traditional)

- Market Segmentation – proposed targets:
- 1) High income luxury tourists (Western and Chinese)
 - 2) Cruise tourists

PHASE 5: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation plan is central to ensuring that implementation stays on track, producing desired benefits for communities and the tourism sector, and contributing to national policies. The recommended monitoring and evaluation process includes the following steps:

1. Identification of preliminary performance indicators for both the execution of the implementation action steps and intended outcomes of the overall implementation
2. The development of a formal evaluation programme (evaluation questionnaires to visitors after the experience)
3. Website analytics and online engagement of users both on website and social media.

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Project: Bazaar – Agora: Experiencing traditional markets along the Silk Road Markets of the BSEC Countries	1 st Semester	2 nd Semester	3 rd Semester
PHASE 0: Inception phase	- Final decision for participations within the BSEC member-states - “label” the project as a BSEC – SR Project - Internal coordination and kick off meetings		
PHASE 1: Research	-Setting up research team - Identification of research specific topics for each country - Mapping and cataloguing of SR attractions and markets - Identification of potential experiential activities		
PHASE 2: Product Development		- Development of participatory workshops with stakeholders - Organization of B2B meetings - Identification of tourism experiences available in pilot destinations and their providers	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Setting up common standards among destinations - Creation of themed itineraries related to Silk Road heritage - Info point in each market of each destination 	
PHASE 3: Training and Capacity Building		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of training needs and participants - Identification of trainers, development of training contents - Trainings and pilot tests 	
PHASE 4: Marketing and Communication			-Designing of common brand, website, mobile applications, etc.

FUNDING: unknown