



BS/TR/WG/R(2005)2

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

Istanbul, 8-9 November 2005

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group (WG) on Transport was held on 8-9 November 2005 at the BSEC Premises in Istanbul.
 2. 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
 3. The PABSEC participated in the Meeting in its capacity as BSEC Related Body.
 4. The representatives of the State of Israel and the Republic of Poland participated at the Meeting as BSEC Observers.
 5. The Union of Road Transportation associations of the BSEC (BSEC-URTA), the Black Sea International Shipping Association (BINSIA), the Black and Azov Sea Ports Association (BASPA) participated in the Meeting as NGOs having sectoral dialogue partnership with the BSEC.
 6. The Meeting was chaired in rotation by Mrs. Catalina PATRAȘCU, Head of Unit, Department for EU and International Coordination, Ministry of Transports, Constructions and Tourism of Romania, and Mr. Dan BARLIBA, Minister Counselor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania.
 7. The Director General of International Road Federation (IRF) participated in the Meeting as Guest.
- The list of participants of the Meeting is attached as Annex I.
8. The draft agenda of the Meeting was discussed and adopted. The agenda, as adopted, is attached as Annex II.

FINALIZATION AND EVENTUAL APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT ACTION PLAN FOR 2005-2007 AND WORKING PROGRAM OF THE WG ON TRANSPORT (TO BE PRESENTED BY ROMANIA AS A COUNTRY COORDINATOR)

9. The Working Group discussed on the Draft Action Plan for 2005-2007 submitted by Romania as a Country-Coordinator at the Meeting of 26-27 January 2005, held in Thessaloniki, Greece.

10. Following the discussion, the Draft Action Plan was approved by the Working Group and recommended for implementation within the framework of Romanian Coordinatorship. The Action Plan, as approved by the Working Group, is attached as Annex III to the present Report. On the basis of the Action Plan the BSEC Member States may present further proposals.

11. The participants welcomed the information presented by the delegation of Romania, the Country-Coordinator of the Working Group and BSEC Chairman-in-Office, on the Meeting of the Ministers of Transport of the Member States to be convened in Bucharest on 15 March 2006 and preceded with a Working Group Meeting on 13-14 March 2006.

12. Furthermore, they took note of the proposal to focus the Agenda of the Meeting, in order to maintain meeting continuity with the Ministerial in Thessaloniki, on the issues related to connecting Black Sea Transport Network with Trans-European Transport Network and developing the intermodal transport chain, and agreed upon its Draft Agenda to be taken into account in the course of preparations for the Meeting. The Draft Agenda of the Working Group Meeting of 13-14 March 2006, is attached as Annex IV to the Report.

13. The participants were informed of the plans for setting up of a special web-site by the Romanian Ministry of Transport, Constructions and Tourism for the period of its Coordinatorship in the Working Group accessible to the Member States, Observers and Sectoral Dialogue Partners. Respective restructuring of relative chapter of the PERMIS website was suggested by Romania along with this to facilitate implementation of the Action Plan, in order to provide restricted access to the working documents for the meetings by the delegates.

ACTIVITIES OF THE HIGH-LEVEL GROUP ON THE EXTENSION OF THE MAJOR TRANS-EUROPEAN TRANSPORT AXES TO THE NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES AND REGIONS

14. In line with its decision to follow thoroughly the pace of work of the High-Level Group on the Extension of the Major Trans-European Transport Axes to the Neighboring Countries and Regions, the Working Group took note of the recent activities of the latter.

15. The participants welcomed finalization by the High-Level Group of a set of axes particularly those connecting TEN with the Black Sea Regional Transport Network, and its progress in selection of major infrastructure projects to be developed along these axes.

16. It was noted with appreciation that while selecting priority transport axes, the High-Level Group took due account of the Pan-European Transport Corridors Network thus providing incentives to its further development.

17. In this connection, the Working Group agreed to update the Black Sea Ring Transport Corridor Concept on a basis of recommendations by the High-Level Group as well as that of UN ECE –

UNESCAP Expert Group on Developing Euro-Asian Transport Linkages and European Conference of Ministers of Transport Meeting.

18. To facilitate discussion, the Working Group reiterated its request to the Member States to provide by 15 February 2006 via PERMIS the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Turkey with their comments on the map of the BSEC Ring Corridor, on the basis of the electronic map kindly provided by the delegation of Turkey.

SURVEY ON SERVICE AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AT BORDER CROSSING POINTS IN THE BLACK SEA REGION

19. The Working Group recalled the Joint Declaration on the Connection of the Black Sea Transport Network with Trans-European Transport Network within the Framework of the Euro-Asian Transport Links, adopted in Thessaloniki on 28 January 2005. In this Declaration the Ministers of Transport of the BSEC Member States agreed that the development of transport axes connecting the Trans-European Transport Network with the Black Sea infrastructure transport network should aim at facilitating all border crossing procedures and transport operations as well as reducing other non-technical barriers.

20. Following presentation by the BSEC-URTA representative, the delegations exchanged views on existing experience in border-crossing facilitation and reducing non-technical barriers in their respective countries. Particularly they took note of the Draft MoU/Protocol on Cross-Border Cooperation along Pan-European Corridor X presented by the delegation of the Hellenic Republic.

21. The participants took note of the oncoming Meeting of the Ad-Hoc Expert Group to be convened with the task to explore the opportunities for cooperation among the customs services, and agreed to communicate their comments on the focus activities of the afore mentioned Group in the field of transportation facilitation.

22. Furthermore, they agreed to continue consideration of the issue enlisting the experience of IRU as well as other regional groupings carrying out transportation facilitation programs in the Black Sea area.

DISCUSSION ON IMPLEMENTATION OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON FACILITATION OF ROAD TRANSPORT OF GOODS

23. The participants welcomed the signing of the MoU on Facilitation of Road Transportation of Goods in the BSEC Region by Romania at the current Meeting with the following reservation: "Romania does not consider itself bound by the provisions of Paragraph 1 of Article 3 of the Memorandum of Understanding on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region".

24. The Working Group took note of the fact that although the internal legal procedures had been completed by all but one BSEC Member State signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods, pursuant to the relevant provision of the document, it did not enter into force. In this respect the Working Group welcomed the statement of the Armenian delegation that the internal legal procedures with regard to the MoU are expected to be accomplished by the end of the year of 2005.

25. Given the above the Working Group recalled the decision taken at its previous Meeting that the issue of the implementation of the MoU would be thoroughly discussed at the WG meeting to be convened following its entry into force.

EXPERT MEETING ON THE DRAFT AGREEMENT ON MUTUAL RECOGNITION OF DIPLOMAS, CERTIFICATES AND OTHER EVIDENCE OF FORMAL QUALIFICATION FOR ROAD HAULAGE OPERATOR AND ROAD PASSENGER OPERATOR OF JULY 2005 AND ITS FOLLOW-UP

26. The delegations were informed of the outcome of the latest Expert Meeting on the Draft Agreement on Mutual Recognition of Diplomas, Certificates and other Evidence of Formal Qualification for Road Haulage Operator and Road Passenger Operator, as well as about the relevant decision of the BSEC Council (Chisinau, 28 October 2005) mandating the BSEC Chairman-in-Office, with the assistance of BSEC PERMIS, to hold consultations with respect to the said Draft Agreement.

27. The Working Group was of the opinion that the next Meeting of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts could be convened after the above mentioned consultations.

CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE BSEC PERMIS AND THE IRU SECRETARIAT

28. The Working Group took note of the Draft Cooperation Agreement between BSEC PERMIS and the General Secretariat of IRU, presented by the BSEC-URTA International Secretariat.

29. Bearing in mind the established practice with respect to the wording of the Memoranda of Understanding between BSEC and other international organizations, the Working Group instructed PERMIS to insert some technical amendments to the MoU, to be conveyed to the IRU General Secretariat.

30. Furthermore, it was agreed that PERMIS will communicate the revised Draft MoU to the BSEC Member States by 1 December 2005. The latter are invited to send back to PERMIS their comments by the end of January 2006, so that the Working Group would be in a position to finalize the matter at a next Meeting.

DISCUSSION ON THE BLACK SEA RING HIGHWAY CONCEPT

31. Having recalled the suggestion of the Russian Federation made at Thessaloniki Working Group Meeting that the Black Sea Ring Highway Concept would be developed under the BSEC auspices, the participants continued deliberations on this issue on a basis of additional information presented by the IRF Director General.

32. The Working Group considered the above mentioned presentation and expressed the view that the concept could be incorporated in the Black Sea Ring Corridor Concept or developed separately. To that effect, the Member States would convey their comments on the issue to the PERMIS within the next two months term while the IRF was invited to present to the Working Group Meeting having consideration of the Latter on the Agenda, its proposals on the issue based on a map of the Ring Corridor.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

33. Following the initial presentation by IRF at the Thessaloniki Working Group Meeting, the delegations had a discussion on the proposal for setting up under the BSEC auspices a regional institution to assist Governments of the BSEC Member States in the field of road development - the BSEC Road Association (BSECRA).

34. It was agreed that the Draft Statutes of BSECRA, prepared by the IRF, would be considered thoroughly by the relevant national institutions and their comments would be forwarded to the PERMIS in two months term to facilitate further discussion on the issue.

35. The BSEC-URTA representative informed the Working Group of the introduction by the Hungarian authorities of restrictions to the ECMT licenses issued to road transport operators from the BSEC region as of 1 January 2006 and kindly suggested to the Meeting to take concrete action to call upon the said authorities to withdraw these measures.

36. It was agreed that the opinions of the Member States on the issue would be conveyed to the PERMIS by 1 December 2005 to enable Romania in its capacity as a Chairman-in-Office and the Country-Coordinator of the Working Group to hold respective consultations with the ECMT Secretariat.

37. The Working Group took note of the presentation of the project proposal titled “Economic Expediency of Opening New International Passenger Ferry Line between Ports of Istanbul – Odessa – Yalta – Novorossiysk – Sochi or other” by the delegation of the Russian Federation and agreed that it would be considered in detail at the next Meeting under the relevant Agenda item.

38. Representative of BASPA informed the Working Group of the initiative of BASPA to involve in the framework of Public-Private Partnership the private terminal operators of sea ports in collecting information on infrastructure development in the Black Sea region.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

39. The next Meeting of the Working Group will be convened in Bucharest, Romania, on 13-14 March 2006.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

40. The Working Group adopted the present report for submission to the next Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials.