



**BS/EDU/WG/R(2007)1**

**REPORT  
OF THE MEETING OF THE BSEC  
WORKING GROUP ON EDUCATION**

**Istanbul, BSEC Headquarters, 13-14 December 2007**

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Education was held in Istanbul, at the BSEC Headquarters, on 13-14 December 2007.
2. The Meeting was co-chaired by Ms. Olha BOHONSKA, Vice-Consul of the Consulate General of Ukraine in Istanbul and Mrs. Melina PAPADAKI, Director for International Education Affairs, Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs of the Hellenic Republic.
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 Serbia
  - Republic of Turkey
  - Ukraine
4. The representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) and the BSEC Business Council also participated in the Meeting as the BSEC Related Bodies.
5. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the Federal Republic of Germany as Observers.

The list of participants is attached as Annex I.

**ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

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

**STATE OF AFFAIRS RELATIVE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TWO YEARS ACTION PLAN OF BSEC COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION (2006-2008) AND OF THE JOINT ATHENS DECLARATION OF THE MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR EDUCATION (2005)**

7. The representatives of the Member States following the activities relative to the implementation of a two-years Action Plan of the Working Group (2006-2008) and recommendations of the Joint Athens Declaration of the Ministers responsible for Education (Athens, September 2005) discussed the following priority topics:

**a) Follow-up of the cooperation in the development of national frameworks of qualifications in order to secure compatibility of the educational systems in the BSEC region;**

8. The Representative of the Republic of Turkey, following the commitment taken by the representative of the Republic of Turkey at the previous Meeting of the WG held in Athens, October 2006, elaborated on *cooperation in the development of national frameworks of qualification with the aim to achieve better compatibility of the educational systems in the BSEC region* and proposed Turkey to organize a conference on this issue. The details on the scope of the conference, venue and date would be communicated by Turkish Side to Member States, through PERMIS, by January 2008.

9. The participants approved the idea of a conference and stressed the importance of the issue for the activities of the Working Group and asked the organizers of the event to inform officially the BSEC Member States on the date and venue of the meeting as soon as possible.

**b) Follow-up of the creation of a network and a web-site, which will be updated systematically with all the necessary reforms and innovative practices by each and every BSEC Member State, and which will provide wider possibilities for unrestricted information and the exchange of experience in the fields of our interest;**

10. The Representative of the Hellenic Republic made a presentation on a network and a web-site (portal) dedicated to educational issues of the BSEC Member States. The said presentation is attached as Annex III to the present Report.

11. The participants exchanged views on the creation of a network and website and decided to proceed with the elaboration on it. The Working Group decided to determine a time-table to be followed: by the end of February 2008 all Member States are requested to communicate through PERMIS to a Country-Coordinator its suggestions and eventual amendments to the Hellenic Republic project proposal and to nominate a focal point for the project; at the next Meeting of the Working Group the Participants will deliberate on the front page and the contents of the portal.

12. The delegation of the Russian Federation considers that BSEC web-site on educational issues could be effective only in case the BSEC common priorities in the field of education are defined. In this regard the Russian Federation made some propositions.

**c) Follow-up on investigation of the possibility of elaborating joint programs and promoting scientific research between Universities and Institutions of Higher Education in accordance with the laws and regulations existing in each country;**

13. The participants decided to relate discussions on the issue to the next sub-item (Item 2, sub-item 3), and discuss the issue more in details at the next meeting of the Working Group.

14. The Executive Manager of PERMIS made appeal to the participants to elaborate more profoundly on the issue at the next meeting, while taking into consideration the established forms of cooperation in this field among Member States.

**d) Promotion of joint research programs with emphasis on social learning between the Universities and Institutions of the BSEC Member States in compliance with their priorities (Lifelong Learning through developing training programs at High and Higher Education level);**

15. Reference should be made to Item 13 and 14 of the Report.

**e) Elaboration on the topic “Providing better transparency of qualifications from Vocational and Educational Training (VET) in the BSEC Member States”;**

16. The Working Group emphasized the importance of providing better understanding and transparency of qualifications received within Vocational and Educational Training (VET) in the BSEC Member States.

17. The Working Group commended participants to elaborate on the issue at its next meeting while including in the presentations references to the higher education.

**f) Exchange of information and practical cooperation with other BSEC Working Groups in related spheres of activity in order to provide better coordination and to create new synergies for the implementation of the Action Plan;**

18. The participants deliberated on how best to exchange of information and establish practical ways of cooperation with other BSEC Working Groups in related spheres of activity with aim to provide better coordination and create new synergies for the implementation of the Action Plan.

19. The participants decided to expand information and cooperation with two BSEC Working Groups, namely with the WG on Cooperation in Science and Technology *on Research Issues* and with the newly established WG on Culture *on Intercultural Dialogue*.

20. The Working Group decided to invite the Representatives of the Country-Coordinators of the above mentioned Working Groups (Item 18 and 19 of the Report) and discuss the issue.

21. The Representative of the Hellenic Republic in its capacity of Country-Coordinator took a commitment to organize within one month a meeting with the Representative of the Country-Coordinator for Working Group on Culture (in Athens) to discuss the issue on organizing a joint meeting (session) - if deemed opportune - of two Groups, during the first half of 2008.

22. The Representative of Hellenic Republic (Country-Coordinator to the Working Group) also took a commitment to contact the Representative of the Country-Coordinator of the Working Group on Cooperation in Science and Technology and discuss the issue on inviting her/him to attend the next meeting of the Working Group on Education and discuss the issue of joint activities of two groups in the field of research.

**g) Follow-up discussion on the project of the Council of Europe considering teaching and inter-cultural dialogue in the Black Sea region;**

23. The Working Group took note of the project of the Council of Europe considering *Black Sea History Teaching* as presented by the BSEC PERMIS Executive Manager.

24. The Working Group acknowledged the willingness of Council of Europe experts to participate at the BSEC WG on Education meetings and share the experience particularly on the initiatives and projects of the Council with regard to Black Sea, and requested PERMIS to secure necessary channel of communication and information on the issue.

25. The Country-Coordinator informed the participants at the meeting on the follow-up of the PROMITHEAS-2 project that was elaborated by Prof. MAVRAKIS from the KEPA University, and funded by the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme of the European Union. The said project was distributed to the participants and is attach as Annex IV to the Report.

26. The participants took note of the project and expressed their support for the cooperation of BSEC and EU within the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme.

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COUNCIL AND JOINT STATEMENTS ADOPTED BY THE MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR EDUCATION (JOINT ATHENS DECLARATION OF THE MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR EDUCATION, ATHENS 2005)**

27. The Representative of BSEC PERMIS informed the participants on the “Implementation of the Resolution of the 15<sup>th</sup> Council (Moscow, 1 November 2006)” with reference to the activities of the Working Groups, and thereafter explained the additional commitments to be taken by the Working Groups with regard to the mentioned Resolution.

28. The Country-Coordinator presented the Working Group with their views on the **“Implementation of the Resolution of the Council and the follow-up of the Declaration of Ministers responsible for Education (2005)”**.

29. The participants took note of the views expressed by the BSEC PERMIS Representative and the Country-Coordinator with regard to the follow-up on Implementation of the Resolution of the Council and the Ministerial Declaration and took a commitment to work more closely on implementing the commitments undertaken at the meetings of the Working Group.

**DISCUSSION ON THE EVALUATION REPORT PRESENTED BY COUNTRY-COORDINATOR**

30. The Country-Coordinator informed the participants on the preparation for drafting the Evaluation Report. The Representative of the Hellenic Republic pointed out that the lack of long-

term appointments by the Member State's Representative to the Working Group (focal points, experts) and the lack of coordination, precluded the Working Group to be more effective and provides ground for a better implementation of the undertakings in Athens Ministerial Declaration and the Action Plan.

31. The participants at the Working Group endorsed the idea of the Country-Coordinator, expressed their concern on the lack of fulfillment of the commitments undertaken at previous meetings and made appeal to Member States to appoint their long-term representatives to the Working Group and to comply more with the undertakings.

32. The Working Group instructed PERMIS to communicate to Member States a request to nominate by the end of February 2008 Representatives to the WG on Education on a long-term basis in order to ensure continuity and efficiency of the activities.

### **PRESENTATION AND CONSIDERATION OF IDEAS AND PROJECTS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION AMONG BSEC MEMBER STATES**

33. The Working Group took note of the presentation by Assistant Prof. Dr. Hilal GOKTAS from *Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University* on project proposal entitled "Simulation and Experimental Studies of Carbon Nanotubes and Nano Rods Synthesized by Electron Beam Generator" submitted by the Republic of Turkey (Leading partner), the Republic of Serbia and Romania.

34. The Project Coordinator of BSEC PERMIS presented a technical assessment with observations on the project and asked for further clarification.

35. The participants at the Meeting decided that the project is indeed interesting from an educational point of view, involving an exchange of students between the three universities. However, it was decided that technical modifications should be introduced according to the PERMIS observations and forward the revised project to the Working Group on Cooperation in Science and Technology for its evaluation of the scientific part.

36. The participants discussed the revised project on education entitled *Black Sea Education Collaboration Platform (BECOP)*, presented by TURKSAT" (Turkey) and decided that each Member State should communicate the presentation to the final recipient in each and every country in each Member State for further assessment and eventual decision on joining the initiative. The updated version of the presentation will be disseminated to the Member States later on.

37. The participants decided to determine a time span (60 days), after the dissemination of the updated version of the presentation, for Member States to communicate the decision through PERMIS to TURKSAT on their positioning *vis-à-vis* their participation at the project.

### **USE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) IN EDUCATION**

38. The BSEC PERMIS Executive Manager and the Representative of the Country-Coordinator provided the Working Group with a brief information on the outcome of discussions at the Meeting of Undersecretaries and Chief of Executives of the BSEC Ministries of Education that took place in Istanbul (August 2007), and with suggestions of the undersecretaries to include

the above mentioned agenda item (Use of ICT in Education) for discussion and appropriate actions of the Working Group meetings.

39. Upon the presentation by the representative of the Republic of Turkey on the pilot project on ICT, the participants discussed the issue and decided to discuss the matter more in details at the next meeting of the Working Group.

40. The Working Group decided to revise the Terms of Reference of the Working Group with the aim to accommodate it to the new topic (ICT).

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

41. Having in mind the discussion on the main tasks of the Working Group, the participants instructed PERMIS to analyze the necessity of producing of working paper (mandate) and to present its opinion at the next meeting. The participants upon discussion on the said paper will decide on the follow-up.

42. The date and venue of the next Meeting will be communicated in due time through BSEC PERMIS, after consultations with the Chairman-in-Office and the Country-Coordinator.

#### **ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING**

43. The present Report was adopted for submission to the next Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials.

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