

**REPORT
OF THE MEETING
OF THE WORKING GROUP ON COOPERATION
IN EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE**

(19-20 October 1999, Athens, Greece)

1. The Second Meeting of the Working Group on Cooperation in Emergency Assistance of the BSEC Member States, established in accordance with the Article 7 of the “Agreement among the Governments of the Participating States of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation on Collaboration in Emergency Assistance and Emergency Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters”, was held in Athens, Greece on 19-20 October 1999.
2. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Astrinos VENIANAKIS, Director of the Bureau of the Secretary General for Civil Protection of the Ministry of Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization of the Hellenic Republic.
3. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the following Participating States of the BSEC:

Republic of Albania
Republic of Armenia
Republic of Azerbaijan
Republic of Bulgaria
Georgia
Hellenic Republic
Romania
Russian Federation
Republic of Turkey

The Meeting was also attended by representatives of Italy as Observer.

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

4. Due to the ongoing emergency situation because of the latest devastating earthquake in Greece, the opening speech of Mr. Dimitrios A. KATRIVANOS, Secretary General for Civil Protection of the Ministry of Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization of the Hellenic Republic, was delivered by his representative, Mrs. Mariangela PITIDIS. The translation of the text of the statement is attached as Annex II.

5. Mr. Evgeni BORISSENKO, Deputy Secretary General, addressed the Meeting on behalf of the BSEC PERMIS. The text of his statement is attached as Annex III.

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

ELABORATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION ON COLLABORATION IN EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE AND ESTABLISHING THE IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM FOR THE AGREEMENT SIGNED BY THE BSEC COUNTRIES

7. Under this agenda item, the Experts discussed the principal priorities of joint cooperation envisaged by the key points of the Agreement on Collaboration in Emergency Assistance. All participants supported the idea of creating an open-ended Planning and Coordination Bureau (PCB) for emergencies within the framework of the Working Group on Cooperation in Emergency Assistance, on a rotational basis, with the aim of taking practical measures for the implementation of the key points of the Agreement.

8. The participants agreed that the Russian Federation, as the country-coordinator of the WG, should submit to the BSEC countries, through the BSEC Secretariat, their proposals with regard to the establishment and functioning of the PCB. Thereupon, the Member States will send their comments along with the names of their candidates for the PCB until 1 December 1999 with a view to taking final decisions on this issue at the next meeting of the WG.

9. In order to start the implementation of the international Agreement signed by the BSEC Countries in Sochi, May 1998, the participants of the WG supported the proposal regarding the improvement of procedures for arrival of rescue means and forces to the affected area at the shortest time. They recommended that the above-mentioned proposal be included in the list of issues to be submitted to the 2000 spring Meeting of the Council of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE ELIMINATION OF EARTHQUAKE CONSEQUENCES

10. The participants unanimously noted that the Black Sea region including the Black Sea and its neighbouring densely-populated territories is a region with a high risk of natural and anthropogenic environmental catastrophes. The BSEC Experts exchanged views regarding consequences of the recent earthquakes in İzmit (Turkey) and Athens (Greece) and they illustrated the practical examples providing immediate and effective assistance from BSEC countries to the countries which suffered from strong earthquakes.

11. The delegations of Greece and Turkey made presentations concerning the recent earthquakes which took place in Athens (Greece) and İzmit (Turkey) and the participants supported the idea to include in the Report of the WG the said presentations as Annex V.

12. Taking into account the importance of the international "Agreement among the Governments of the Participating States of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) on collaboration in Emergency Assistance and Emergency Response to natural and man-made

Disasters”, as well as its significant role at the present time, the Turkish delegation officially announced the readiness of the Government of the Republic of Turkey to accede thereto.

13. The participants called upon the Governments of the BSEC Participating States and the relevant international economic organizations to render assistance and support, including financial, for further development of collaboration in emergency assistance and emergency response to natural and man-made disasters. The Experts underlined the significant role of the regional and international institutions and agencies in the coordinated activities of the BSEC countries in case of natural and man-made disasters as well as establishment of closer contacts with the above organizations.

ACTIVITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARINE RESCUE CENTER IN GELENDZHNIK (RUSSIA)

14. The Russian delegation submitted information regarding the activity of the International Gelendzhik Marine Rescue Center and addressed to the WG participants to submit in due time the list of the national forces which the BSEC countries can provide for participation in joint regional relief operation.

15. The participants took note of the information provided by the Russian delegation regarding the activity of the International Marine Rescue Center in Gelendzhik and concluded that the said information should be updated and submitted to the PERMIS in writing for distribution as soon as possible.

SUBMISSION OF THE DELEGATIONS OF THE LIST OF NATIONAL FORCES IN ORDER TO BE REGISTERED WITH THE CENTER IN GELENDZHNIK

16. The Experts noted that the soon-to-be created Planning and Coordination Bureau (PCB) should gather all necessary information concerning national emergency means and forces which are possibly to be listed for joint emergency and humanitarian operations in the future under the control of the joint committee of national coordinators in Gelendzhik International Center.

SETTING-UP OF INTERNATIONAL FUNDS AND CENTERS IN THE BSEC REGION ORIENTED ON PREVENTION AND ELIMINATION OF CONSEQUENCES OF NATURAL AND MAN-MADE DISASTERS

17. The participants supported the suggestion of the creation of an international trust fund of emergencies within the framework of the BSEC which will be controlled by the joint management of the BSEC countries. The Secretariat was assigned to prepare, in cooperation with the WG, an appeal to international financial and humanitarian organizations and to private bodies, for their contribution in the trust fund of emergencies. In the next WG meeting the Secretariat has to inform about the response for the international appeal. Depending on the results, the management structure should be discussed.

18. The participants took note with interest of the proposal of the Georgian delegation regarding the creation, within the framework of the BSEC, the “International Fund of Mutual Aid and Peace Initiatives of Saving Services of the Countries of Black Sea Basin”.

19. The Experts decided that the basic documents, submitted by the Georgian delegation, should be improved and they recommended to the Latter to deliver the said documents to the BSEC Secretariat by the end of 1999.

20. The BSEC Secretariat confirmed its readiness to distribute the final version of the said documents to the BSEC Member States and to include the proposals and suggestions of the countries in the agenda of the next meeting of the Working Group.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

21. The Experts underlined the importance of the relations between the Armenian and Russian seismological institutions and supported the idea for all BSEC countries to participate in a joint meeting between the Experts of the WG on Cooperation in Emergency Assistance, the WG on Cooperation in Science and Technology and the Krasnodar State University in the framework of the Seismology Association of the Black Sea Region.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

22. The participants expressed their gratitude to the Greek authorities for the excellent arrangements of the Meeting and warm hospitality.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

23. The exact date and venue of the Meeting will be communicated through the Secretariat upon receipt of official information from the Republic of Moldova who will hold the next Chairmanship of the Organization of the BSEC.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

24. The Report was adopted for submission to the Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States, to be held in Thessaloniki, Greece on 27 October 1999.
