



BS/EP/WG/R(98)1

**REPORT OF THE
MEETING OF THE
WORKING GROUP ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

Sofia, 14-15 September 1998

1. The Meeting of the Working Group (WG) on Environmental Protection was held in Sofia, Bulgaria on 14-15 September 1998.
 2. The Meeting was co-chaired by Mr. Emil MARINOV, Deputy Minister of Environment and Waters of the Republic of Bulgaria and Mr. Plamen DJADJEV, National Coordinator of the Black Sea Environmental Programme in the said Ministry.
 3. The Meeting was attended by the following Participating States :
 - Republic of Armenia
 - Republic of Bulgaria
 - Hellenic Republic
 - Republic of Moldova
 - Romania
 - Russian Federation
 - Republic of Turkey
 - Ukraine
 4. The representatives of the International Black Sea Club (IBSC) in Varna attended the Meeting as Observers.
 5. The representatives of the Black Sea Environmental Programme/Project Implementation Unit (BSEP/PIU), Center of Environmental and Safety Aspects of Shipping, BSEC Marmara Center and the Resident Mission of the World Bank in Sofia attended the Meeting as guests.
- The list of participants is attached as Annex I.
6. Mrs. Mariana LUKOVA, Deputy Minister of Environment and Waters of the Republic of Bulgaria welcomed the participants of the Meeting.
 7. The draft agenda of the Meeting which was discussed and adopted is attached as Annex II.

HARMONIZATION OF THE NATIONAL SYSTEMS OF ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

8. The views on the necessity and possible approaches to the harmonization of the national systems of environmental monitoring of the BSEC Participating States were exchanged. The participants agreed that harmonized monitoring system of the BSEC Participating States should be developed on the basis of the specificity of environmental factors in different relevant areas (e.g. marine zone, inland waters, soil, etc).

9. The WG took note with appreciation of the intention of Romania to assume the task of elaboration of the framework for the work aimed at exchange of information in view of harmonizing the national systems of water monitoring as a pilot phase of a harmonization process.

STATE OF ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BLACK SEA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FUND

10. The participants were informed by the BSEP/PIU of the current stage of working on the concept of the Black Sea Environmental Protection Fund and appreciated the work done to that end.

11. They requested the PIU to further study the conceptual framework of the Fund, which includes its principal objectives, structural organization, options for revenue generation, project selection criteria, disbursement priorities, institutional arrangements and operational principles and the financial framework which includes financing options, flows of funds, exchange rate issues and banking requirements.

12. The PERMIS was requested to keep the BSEC WG on Environmental Protection continuously informed on the progress achieved by the BSEP in connection with the establishment of the Fund.

13. The participants expressed their support for the establishment of a regional fund in the Black Sea in principle by emphasizing the importance and the necessity of having such a mechanism.

ASPECTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY OF SHIPPING

14. The WG was informed of the activities of the BSEP regarding the environmental safety aspects of shipping in the region carried out by the Center of Environmental and Safety Aspects of Shipping in Varna.

15. To make best use of the Center in Varna, the participants agreed on the following measures aimed at enhancing collaboration between the said Center and national authorities responsible for dealing with pollution of the marine environment as a result of navigation activities and in particular in case of emergencies at sea :

a) providing communication facilities and establishment of communication between the Center and the national authorities;

b) coordination in developing R&D activities covering the priority needs of the contingency planning in the region;

c) coordination of common approaches in the National Contingency Plans.

16. They agreed upon the soonest implementation of the para.38 of the Black Sea Strategic Action Plan concerning the establishment of a harmonized system of a port state control and welcomed the activities of the Center in cooperation with national authorities and the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

17. They asked the PERMIS to assist in establishment of cooperation of the Center with the BSEC WG on Transport on matters relevant to the environmental protection.

INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE BLACK SEA AGAINST POLLUTION

18. The WG took note of the information presented by the Russian Chairmanship concerning institutional aspects of the implementation of the Bucharest Convention.

19. Following the recommendation of the Tenth MMFA, the WG discussed the matter of establishing the Permanent International Secretariat of the Istanbul Commission and respective actions to be taken, with due account of the measures elaborated as well as the documents agreed upon earlier. Having estimated the progress achieved so far, the WG called upon the Commission of the Bucharest Convention to finalize the pending working documents, namely Headquarters Agreement and Immunities and Privileges.

20. With reference to the negotiations between Turkey and the Russian Federation about the Headquarters Agreement, the Turkish Delegation informed the WG that major problems regarding the said Agreement had been eliminated and would be communicated to the Russian side at the earliest convenience through diplomatic channels.

21. To create financial ground for the implementation of the Bucharest Convention the signatories of the latter were asked to provide their contributions for 1999 taking into account that due to the economic situation in the region the reduced budget of the Secretariat was approved for the first year.

PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECTS CARRIED OUT BY THE BSEC MARMARA CENTER

22. The WG took note in a positive manner of the information presented by the BSEC Marmara Center regarding the development of the BSEC projects in marine environment. The description of projects which were considered by the WG is attached as Annex III.

23. The participants called upon the respective Governments of the Participating States and the BSEC Business Council to provide practical assistance to the projects carried out under the auspices of the BSEC, such as those carried out by the said Center. They requested the Center of Environmental and Safety Aspects of Shipping in its capacity of the leading coordinating structure of the BSEP to consider possible ways and means of cooperation with the BSEC Marmara Center, using the capacity of the Advisory Group on Environmental and Safety Aspects of Shipping.

APPOINTMENT OF COUNTRY-COORDINATOR FOR THE WG ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

24. The participants considered the proposal to appoint a country-coordinator in the field of environmental protection in line with the relevant provision of the Yalta Summit Declaration.

25. They were in the opinion that the appointment of country-coordinator would be beneficial for the high level coordination of the environmental protection activities in the BSEC region.

26. The WG welcomed the willingness expressed by the Republic of Bulgaria to assume the role of country-coordinator and requested it to inform the Participating States of the final decision at the earliest convenience.

27. The participants decided to consider the term of coordinatorship as well as certain functions and mandate of country-coordinator at the next meeting of the WG taking into account the experience gained by that time.

28. They agreed that a country-coordinator should carry out its activities in close cooperation with the existing structures of the BSEP.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

29. The WG was in the opinion that project selection criteria and financing mechanisms shall be elaborated by the PERMIS and submitted for consideration at the next meeting of the WG.

30. They asked the PERMIS in cooperation with the BSEC Business Council, to invite the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB), international financial

organizations and business institutions to contribute by practical means to the implementation of the BSEC environmentally-oriented projects.

31. The participants agreed that a major task of the WG on Environmental Protection should be promoting of the environmental issues identified in projects, proposed by other WGs of the BSEC.

32. The delegation of Turkey informed the participants of the OSCE Seminar to be held in Istanbul on 4-6 November 1998, titled "Regional Environmental Problems and Cooperative Approaches to Resolving Them- the case of the Black Sea Region".

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

33. The Participating States which may wish to host the next Meeting of the WG on Environmental Protection will accordingly notify the BSEC PERMIS.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

34. The participants expressed their sincere thanks and gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria, and in particular to the Ministry of Environment and Waters for the warm hospitality and courtesies extended to them and for the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

35. The WG expressed thanks to the Observers and guests of the Meeting for their participation and contribution.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

36. The WG adopted the present report for submission to the Twelfth Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs.
