



BS/SE/WG/R(97)1

**REPORT OF THE
MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON
EXCHANGE OF STATISTICAL DATA AND ECONOMIC INFORMATION**

Ankara, 15-16 April 1997

1. The Meeting of the Working Group on Exchange of Statistical Data and Economic Information was held in Ankara on 15-16 April 1997.
2. Mr. Mehmet Sýddýk ENSARÝ, President of the State Institute of Statistics of the Republic of Turkey made the opening statement which is attached as Annex I.
3. The Meeting was attended by the following Participating States of the BSEC:
 - Republic of Azerbaijan
 - Republic of Bulgaria
 - Georgia
 - Hellenic Republic
 - Republic of Moldova
 - Romania
 - Russian Federation
 - Republic of Turkey
 - Ukraine

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

4. The Meeting was chaired, on behalf of the host country, by Ambassador Nurver NUREŞ, Deputy Director at the BSEC PERMIS.
5. The WG discussed the draft agenda of the Meeting and adopted it with an amendment. The agenda, as adopted, is attached as Annex III.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PUBLICATION TITLED “SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INDICATORS OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION COUNTRIES” IN THE LIGHT OF AN IMPROVED AND ADJUSTED QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COLLECTING STATISTICAL DATA AND ECONOMIC INFORMATION

6. This item was discussed at length and it was agreed that the publication titled “Social and Economic Indicators of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Countries” and the related work will continue on the basis of the current questionnaire which is expected to be completed and sent back to the BSEC Coordination Center for the Exchange of Statistical Data and Economic Information, called hereinafter the BSEC Coordination Center, by E-mail (bsec@die.gov.tr) or by any other suitable means, by the end of June 1997.

The participating delegations shared the view that the current questionnaire needed more clear methodological definitions in order to bring about a wider uniformity in answers which will constitute the basis for developing comparable statistics.

It was further recommended that the content of this questionnaire will be expanded covering a wider margin of social sphere such as income structure, consumption, unemployment, education, tourism, environment, etc. Thereafter, the BSEC Coordination Center will develop a complementary questionnaire from which, in consultations with the participating delegations, the necessary statistical data will be derived on the aforementioned subjects. This new initiative will, upon completion, be a part of the “Social and Economic Indicators” publication. This is planned to be completed by the end of this calendar year.

REVIEW OF THE CONTENT AND THE USE OF THE PUBLICATION TITLED “TURKEY’S FOREIGN TRADE WITH THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION COUNTRIES” WHICH WILL BE ISSUED QUARTERLY

7. This subject together with the publication titled “Turkey’s Foreign Trade with the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Countries” was discussed thoroughly. Various delegations having found this publication useful, the Participating States agreed to issue similar publications on member states through the BSEC Coordination Center which would indicate, as in the said publication, their imports from /exports to the countries within the BSEC region on the basis of commodities exchanged and their total value.

With this in mind the BSEC Coordination Center will continue to send diskettes on “Turkey’s Foreign Trade with the BSEC Countries”. Taking this as a sample, the Participating States will send diskettes on their foreign trade as described above to the BSEC Coordination Center which will be reprocessed and published in a proper format for distribution.

PUBLICATION OF THE “ECONOMIC OUTLOOK” OF THE BSEC PARTICIPATING STATES

8. All the participating delegations agreed that the publication on “Economic Outlook” of the BSEC Participating States is a matter which is outside the scope of the WG on Exchange of Statistical Data and Economic Information. It was stated that the subject of economy, trends and prospects therein is often the responsibility of Ministries in charge of economic affairs and/or trade and industrial development. It was suggested therefore that publication on “Economic Outlook” might be considered in another subsidiary organ of the BSEC, possibly by the WG on Trade and Economic Development.

EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE PREPARATION OF A “WORKSHOP ON INDUSTRIAL STATISTICS” AMONG BSEC COUNTRIES TO BE ORGANIZED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF UNIDO

9. On this item complementary information available at this stage was given on the planned “Workshop on Industrial Statistics”. While some delegations explained the difficulties they encounter in developing industrial statistics, all the participating delegations displayed keen interest in organizing this Workshop and added that their respective countries will be ready to take part in it.

REVIEW OF THE EXISTING STATISTICAL SYSTEMS WITH A VIEW TO ESTABLISHING SUCH STANDARDS IN HARMONY WITH INTERNATIONAL PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES UPON WHICH COMPARABLE STATISTICAL DATA CAN BE DEVELOPED

10. In the exchange that took place under this item the participating delegations shared the view that this is a very important and substantive, cross-border subject which deals with the entire spectrum of economic and social growth. It was added that already there are so many classification systems recognized on the international plane together with numerous statistical classification systems on the national level. Keeping these in mind it was agreed that the BSEC Coordination Center would prepare a questionnaire to be sent to the Participating States in order to figure out in broad lines the major classification systems in operation with a view to study possible harmonization upon them. The exchange of the questionnaire and replies thereof will be realized by the end of September 1997.

ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS FOR EXCHANGING STATISTICAL DATA AND ECONOMIC INFORMATION AND IMPROVING THE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS BETWEEN STATISTICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE BSEC COORDINATION CENTER FOR EXCHANGE OF STATISTICAL DATA AND ECONOMIC INFORMATION

11. It emerged as a shared view that durable horizontal flow of information between the national statistical authorities and the BSEC Coordination Center is of major importance for future collaboration in the exchange of statistical data and economic information. While the Participating States endorsed this system of exchange of information, it was also agreed that instead of traditional communication lines, the

Participating States from hereon should utilize the modern high technology of communication by making fuller use of the facsimile, E-mail and internet as much as possible.

It was further decided that the participating delegations will continue to the extent possible exchanging among themselves and with the BSEC Coordination Center as well as the PERMIS statistical and informative publications by ordinary mail and other possible means.

DISCUSSION OF THE 1997 ACTIVITY PROGRAM OF THE BSEC COORDINATION CENTER FOR THE EXCHANGE OF STATISTICAL DATA AND ECONOMIC INFORMATION

12. The participating delegations agreed on the following 1997 Working Program for the BSEC Coordination Center:

- To establish and maintain computerized data bases;
- To complete the work on transportation statistics which is expected to be concluded by the end of May 1997 upon receipt of the necessary data from five other Participating States;
- To continue on issuing the publication titled “Social and Economic Indicators of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Countries” annually. In this context, on the basis of a complementary questionnaire additional statistics will be developed in accordance with the sectors proposed by the participating delegations;
- To continue on issuing publications related to foreign trade which will be compiled in one single publication titled the “Foreign Trade of the Participating States within the Black Sea Economic Cooperation”;
- To organize a “Workshop on Industrial Statistics”, possibly in collaboration with UNIDO;

- To establish and cultivate contacts with other international organizations operating in the same field in order to develop closer cooperation;
- To cooperate more actively with the Working Groups and other subsidiary organs of the BSEC in order to respond to their needs on statistical data and economic information.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13. No topics were raised under this agenda item.

14. The Turkish State Institute of Statistics apprized the participating delegations on the coming 51st Session of the International Statistical Institute to be held on 18-26 August 1997 in Istanbul. The representative from the BSEC Coordination Center provided added information on this major Conference where approximately 1500 invitees are expected. The same representative addressing the delegations highly recommended their attendance in the forthcoming Conference.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

15. The delegations expressed their thanks and appreciation to the State Institute of Statistics of the Republic of Turkey and the BSEC Coordination Center for the warm hospitality extended to the delegations and the excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

16. Keeping in mind the significance of cooperating in the field of statistical data and economic information and appreciating the workload ahead of the WG, the participating delegations agreed to organize the next meeting sometime in Autumn. Its venue will be determined through diplomatic channels and thereafter the exact date and venue will be communicated to the Participating States in due time.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

17. The WG adopted the present report for submission to the Ninth Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs.