



BS/WG/ICT/R(2009)1

**MEETING OF THE
BSEC WORKING GROUP
ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES**

Baku, 2-3 November 2009

REPORT

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Information and Communication Technologies was held in Baku on 2-3 November 2009.
2. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Bakhtiyar MAMMADOV, Head of Legal and HR Department of the Ministry of Communications and IT of the Republic of Azerbaijan.
3. The following BSEC Member States attended the Meeting:
 - Republic of Azerbaijan
 - Republic of Bulgaria
 - Georgia
 - Hellenic Republic
 - Romania
 - Russian Federation
 - Republic of Turkey
 - Ukraine
4. The representatives of the United States of America participated in the Meeting as BSEC Observer.
5. The List of Participants of the Meeting is attached as Annex I.
6. The draft agenda of the Meeting was discussed and adopted. The agenda, as adopted, is attached as Annex II.

REVIEW OF THE STATE OF COOPERATION AMONG THE MEMBER STATES AND THE STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COUNCIL

7. The Working Group positively noted that after its previous Meeting held in Kyiv on 4-5 December 2007, and, in accordance with the instructions of the 18th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States, the following actions were taken:

- The Forum of the Black Sea Broadcasting Regulatory Authorities was established at the Inaugural Meeting held in Istanbul on 30 June 2008;
- The relevant statutory documents and plan for the future work of the Forum were elaborated by the Committee of Experts at the Meeting in Antalya on 25-26 June 2009;
- The Forum on Promoting Regional Cooperation through Information Technologies was held in Yerevan on 2-3 April 2009. The Forum addressed the issues of crisis impact on the IT sector, country IT policies, development of IT societies and IT education. The Forum also outlined several directions in which BSEC could cooperate within the Working Group on Information and Communication Technologies. Special attention was given to the IT education in different spheres of economic cooperation and elaboration of multilateral IT projects;
- During this period a number of international events devoted to the development of the ICT sector was held in the region and multilateral projects in this sphere were implemented.

DISCUSSION ON THE PROSPECTS OF COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF ICT AMONG THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

8. The participants noted that information and communication technologies significantly influence socio-economic developments of their countries. The growth of the ICT sector contributes to overall economic growth; it has an important impact on the quality of living standards; ICT increases the chances in the labor market, effects opportunities and creates new jobs. The delegations underlined the importance of strengthening BSEC cooperation in the ICT field.

9. Based on their discussions, the delegations agreed to reflect their proposals for ICT priority fields in the relevant Action Plan and Work Program for 2009-2011.

10. The delegation of Bulgaria stated that the Bulgarian Chairmanship-in-Office will pay due attention to this field within BSEC for the forthcoming half-year period.

11. The representatives of the Republic of Turkey gave information about Turkey's vision of transformation into an information society. In this regard, it was stated that Turkey attributes great importance to ensure basic ICT access to everyone within the territory of the Republic of Turkey independently of the geographical location.

12. It was also pointed out that as well as enjoying the benefits of ICT, it is important to be aware of security concerns and difficulties brought by the new technologies.

13. In this regard, the participants were informed about the measures which Turkey takes to tackle the negative impacts of the Internet and to provide safer cyber-space.

14. Stressing the importance of cooperation in the ICT field the Turkish delegation invited the BSEC Member States to work more closely and develop joint projects.

15. The delegation of the Russian Federation made a brief overview of the present situation and perspectives in the ICT sector at the national and international levels. It was stated that the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation should play a significant role in the development of this sector in the region.

16. The representative of Ukraine, referring to the BSEC Action Plan concerning development of cooperation in satellite technologies, gave examples of fruitful cooperation in this field between Ukraine and Azerbaijan based on the Framework Agreement between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan about Cooperation in the Field of Research and Space Use in Peace Purposes, signed on 9 April 2009. He underlined that the BSEC Member States have great opportunities for the development of cooperation in this and other fields.

17. The delegation of Georgia informed about the implementation of the Georgian Governmental Network project (GGN) which started in 2006. The project involves 500 points in different governmental bodies, and it is an example of formation of e-governance in Georgia. Due attention is paid to the

establishment and promotion of effective public-private partnership. For that purpose Georgia convened the Georgian IT Innovation Conference which promotes information exchange in the field of ICT. On 29-30 October 2009 such international conference was held in Georgia and it is planned to have such conferences in the future.

18. The Delegation of Georgia informed the BSEC Member States about “the illegal actions (operating on the territory of Georgia and willfully granting with world’s numbering codes of 7th zone to so called “Republic of Abkhazia”) conducted by the Russian Federation on the inseparable territories of Georgia, namely Abkhazia, Georgia and South Ossetia/Tskhinvali Region, Georgia.”

The full information is given in Annex III.

19. The delegation of the Russian Federation stated that the information of the delegation of Georgia, mentioned in Para. 18 as well as in Annex III, could not be considered as a fact, and does not follow under the competence of the BSEC Organization.

PRESENTATION BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ABOUT THE REGIONAL INITIATIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ON THE TRANS-EURASIAN INFORMATION SUPER HIGHWAY

20. The delegation of Azerbaijan noted that in comparison with the Western countries the rest of Eurasian region including BSEC Member States, share so-called problem of ‘digital divide’. Undersupply of international connectivity and low broadband penetration level in the region may deepen this problem in the future.

21. Long-term risks can create a wider gap in social and economic development. These problems and ways of their solution were clearly numbered in the Baku Declaration on Trans-Eurasian Information Super Highway (TASIM) (14 November 2008).

22. Some countries have already shown their great interest in participation in feasibility study for the TASIM development.

23. Showing the benefits that can be received from the realization of the project, the Azerbaijani side expressed its belief that the parties to the project can play an integral role in supporting the closure of ‘digital divide’ through

improvement of socio-economic indicators, ensuring universal access to e-services and establishment of knowledge-based economies.

24. The participants shared the concern of the Azerbaijani side concerning the ‘digital divide’ and expressed their view that the initiative should be thoroughly studied by all BSEC Member States for further possible joining the project, as well as seeking the best ways for its implementation.

PRESENTATIONS OF PROJECT PROPOSALS

25. The Working Group favorably considered the presentation by the Republic of Turkey of the Black Sea Interconnection Project, which is under implementation and it expressed the view that the BSEC involvement into the next phase of the Project would be beneficial for the Organization. An eventual renaming of the project could be examined by its stakeholders.

26. In this context, the delegations of Greece, Bulgaria and Georgia suggested that the next phase of the Project could be called “BSEC Research and Education Interconnection Project”, although they recognized the need for the proper implementation of the next phase and do not wish that this issue hinders the project. The delegation of Russia supported this suggestion in principle.

Presentation and discussion of the Plan of Action and the Working Program for 2009-2011 of BSEC WG on Information and Communication Technologies

27. The Working Group discussed and agreed its Action Plan for 2009-2011, prepared by the Country-Coordinator. Based on the provisions of the Action Plan, the Working Group invited the Member States to contribute to the Work Program by informing via PERMIS about the international ICT events in their countries and extending the relevant invitations to the BSEC Member States to participate in them. The said Plan is attached as Annex IV.

28. The Working Program will be open for additional proposals during the said period.

Consideration of the draft of Baku Declaration of the Ministers of Information and Communication Technologies of the BSEC Member States

29. The Working Group considered and agreed the Draft Declaration for its submission to the Meeting of the Ministers of Information and Communication Technologies of the BSEC Member States to be held in Baku on 4 November 2009. The said Draft Declaration is attached as Annex V.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

30. No issue was raised under this Agenda Item.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

31. The participants expressed their high appreciation to the Ministry of Communications and IT of the Republic of Azerbaijan for the warm hospitality extended to them in Baku.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

32. The date and venue of the next Meeting will be communicated to the Member States through BSEC PERMIS in due course.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

33. The present Report was adopted for submission to the Meeting of the Ministers of Information and Communication Technologies of the BSEC Member States to be held in Baku on 4 November 2009 and the next Meeting of the BSEC Committee of Senior Officials.