



BS/CM/WG/R(2004)1

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

Istanbul, BSEC Headquarters, 29-30 January 2004

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Communications was held at the BSEC Headquarters in Istanbul on 29-30 January 2004.
2. The Meeting was chaired by Mrs. Elmira AHMADOVA, Vice-Consul of the Consulate General of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Istanbul.
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 Turkey
Ukraine
4. The Meeting was also attended by the representatives of the PABSEC, the BSEC Business Council and the ICBSS.
5. The representative of Israel attended the Meeting as observer.
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.

FINALIZATION OF THE SHORT-TERM PLAN OF ACTION ON COMMUNICATIONS

7. Having considered, in accordance with the relevant decisions of the previous meeting of the WG, the state of elaboration of an Action Plan, the participants converged on the following:

- The Republic of Turkey assumed Coordination for a WG on Communications for a period till October 2004, will finalize a detailed Short Term Action Plan on a basis of the Frame Text of the former presented at the WG meeting of November 2002;
- In order to enable the Country-Coordinator to accomplish the above-mentioned task, the Member States will send their proposals on the content of the Action Plan to the PERMIS by 15 February 2004;
- The PERMIS is entrusted to collect the proposals to be sent by the Member States and collaborate with the Country-Coordinator so that the finalized Action Plan could be disseminated by 1 March 2004.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS MARKETS IN THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

8. The delegations presented reports and exchanged views on the legal and institutional aspects of liberalization of the national telecommunications markets. While noting a general progress in the process of liberalization and privatization of telecommunications sectors in the BSEC Member States, the participants underlined the necessity of further concerted actions towards greater liberalization and increased competition.

a) approval of a matrix for systematization of information

9. In this connection the WG deemed it conducive to search on national liberalization and privatization policies on a permanent basis in order to benefit from information on good practices and agreed to that end upon a matrix for systematization of information on the developments in the telecommunications market in the Member States. The afore-mentioned matrix is attached as Annex III.

b) consideration of the proposal on the need of liberalization of some kind of telecommunication services

10. The WG renewed discussions on the proposal of the Hellenic Republic on liberalization of some kind of telecommunication services and agreed to consider it at the next meeting of the WG.

-While asserting that the implementation of the proposal cannot be fully achieved due to existing Laws and Regulations of the BSEC Member States, the WG was of the opinion that the steps towards new and more flexible legislation regarding the liberalization of some telecom services, are expected to be occurred in the near future. In order to facilitate further consideration of the proposal, the BSEC Member States are expected to forward their accurate queries to the respective Greek authorities so that the latter could submit a relevant background paper to the WG.

- Since its implementation depends on the compatibility with the provisions of respective national laws and regulations, the WG requested the PABSEC Economic, Commercial, Technological and Environmental Affairs Committee to consider it with a view of elaboration of appropriate actions to be taken by the legislative bodies of the Member States.

PRESENTATION OF PROPOSALS ON PROJECT ELABORATION

11. The representatives of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey presented information on possible directions of cooperation in the field of telecommunications.

12. Türk Telekom presented the following project ideas to be developed with the interested Member States as the joint BSEC projects:

- i. an extensive e-business web site which should support multi-lingual access in order to enable people from different countries to access the content in their own language;
- ii. a cross-border e-health service;
- iii. facilities in order to enable the members install their Call Centers in other BSEC Countries;
- iv. facilities for free-mail service for all BSEC Member States;
- v. installation of an Multi Protocol Label Switching (MPLS) Point of Presence (POP) in Istanbul.

Having in mind eventual participation in these projects, the delegations requested Türk Telekom representatives to provide the Member States with additional information concerning possible development of the above mentioned ideas

13. The WG took note with interest of the presentation by the delegation of the Russian Federation regarding project proposal in the field of telemedicine, encompassing medical care in emergency cases, establishment of a telenetwork for medical support in recreation areas and resorts, taking measures preventing proliferation of HIV/AIDS and other contagious diseases.

14. Having recalled the presentation by Türk Telekom regarding use of telecommunications satellites operating geosynchronous orbit, the delegations recommended to renew its consideration at the earliest possible WG meeting.

15. The participants took note of the presentation by the PERMIS of the BSEC Project Development Fund. The WG invited the Member States to submit their proposals on regional project development in the telecommunications services area and to forward applications to the

PERMIS in order to consider them at the forthcoming meeting of the Fund's Steering Committee in due course.

16. They also agreed that the proposals on the projects to be developed in the BSEC framework presented by the OTE (Greece) will be considered at the next WG meeting if updated and adjusted to the BSEC requirements.

UPDATING OF THE BSEC DIRECTORY ON COMMUNICATIONS

17. The participants welcomed the nomination of contact points by the Member States represented in the meeting and urged the rest of the countries to inform the PERMIS of the relevant appointments at their earliest convenience. The list of contact points for the WG on Communications as of 30 January 2004 is attached as Annex IV.

18. The WG also entrusted the PERMIS to keep in touch with the national contact points of the Member States for collecting current information to the BSEC Directory on Communications on a regular basis.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

19. The Secretary General of the BSEC Business Council Dr. Costas Masmanidis informed of the 3rd International Caspian Telecoms Conference, to take place in Istanbul on 14-16 April 2004. The conference, supported by the BSEC Business Council, is aimed at contributing to a stronger public-private partnership in the Region in the field of Telecommunications.

20. The delegation of Romania stated the importance of the regulatory matters with regard to the provisions of the Action Plan and project implementation and proposed to consider the issue at the forthcoming meeting of the WG.

21. The WG took note of the proposal of the delegation of Azerbaijan regarding IT&C development, the text of which is attached as Annex V.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT MEETING

21. The WG agreed that the next meeting, focused on consideration of proposals on project development, will be held in September 2004. The exact date and venue will be communicated to the Member States through BSEC PERMIS in due course.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

22. The Report was adopted for submission to the Tenth Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to be held in Baky on 30 April 2004.
