



Annex V to BS/PAJM/R(2005)1

**JOINT DECLARATION ON INSTITUTIONAL RENEWAL AND GOOD
GOVERNANCE OF THE MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION AND THE MINISTERS OF JUSTICE OF THE MEMBER
STATES OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC
COOPERATION (BSEC)**

(Athens, 21 February 2005)

We, the Ministers in charge of Public Administration and the Ministers of Justice of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) met to set the basis for further cooperation and development of synergies for institutional renewal and good governance;

Aiming to implement the BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future (Moscow, 27 April 2001) which affirmed the commitment of the BSEC Member States to support cooperative action on key aspects of governance, namely legality and legitimacy, effective partnerships, policy integration, responsible budgeting, investing in governance capacity, Black Sea cities exchange, anticipating crisis management and building key networks;

Acknowledging that transparent, responsible, accountable and participatory government, responsive to the needs and aspirations of the people, is the foundation on which good governance rests and that such a foundation is a sine qua non for the full realization of economic and social development;

Recognizing that good governance and the building of effective democratic institutions are a continuous process for all Governments, regardless of the level of development of the countries concerned;

Noting that good governance practices may vary according to the particular circumstances and needs of different societies and that the primary responsibility for determining and implementing such practices rests with the relevant national authorities;

Reaffirming the importance of regional and international cooperation in facilitating the implementation of good governance practices at all levels in fulfilling the right to development;

Taking into account the provisions of the Recommendation 69/2003 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC) on ‘Cooperation among the PABSEC Member Countries in Strengthening Good Governance’ adopted by the General Assembly in Chisinau on 11 June 2003;

Appreciating the role of the International Center for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) in promoting good governance and welcoming in this regard the focus of the Workshop series on “Strengthening international relations capacities of the BSEC Member Countries” which reflects the importance that the BSEC countries assign to government capacity building in the context of the growing role of interdependence and globalization;

Recognizing that effective public sector performance at the national, regional and local level is a precondition for responding to a wide range of challenges;

Acknowledging that an unprecedented intensification in the relations of national administrations is being witnessed both at intra-BSEC (i.e. among BSEC Member States) and at international level (i.e. between national administrations and various international organizations); and that in some BSEC Member States, which already are or aspire to become members of the European Union, interaction with the EU institutions has underpinned public policy transformation;

Declare the following,

We pledge all best efforts in order to work out a concept as a basis for enabling national measures and regional cooperation in the BSEC area in the field of institutional renewal and good governance taking into account the provisions of the *BSEC Economic Agenda for the Future*, the priorities of the Member States and the global challenges;

We consider that intensified efforts are needed to implement economic, legal and administrative reforms to provide for good governance structures, which are essential for creating confidence in public administration, serving an equitable and sustainable economic, social and political development;

We recognize the imperative of strengthening international relations capacities of the BSEC Member States in view of the internationalization of most spheres of public policy, in particular with regard to intensified and multidimensional interaction with international and regional organizations including the European Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. This requires coordination of actions of national institutions, which have links with international organizations and know-how transfer on cooperative actions at bilateral and multilateral level;

We stress that the accomplishment of our common goals and tasks in promoting effective cooperation in the BSEC region especially in the vital sectors of trade and investments, energy, transport, communications, environment, tourism and agriculture, will be facilitated by the creation of a regional network for public policy dialogue and enhancing capacity for policy reform;

To this end, *we support* cooperative activities around policy formulation and implementation in key reform areas:

- identification and exchange of best practices in human resources management so that public service values such as integrity, professionalism, effectiveness and accountability are maintained and nurtured;
- promotion of interaction between civil society and public administration structures;
- training of civil servants in innovating practices, the use of technology and communications to foster e-government, and with a view to improving the quality and delivery of public services and the simplification of the administrative procedures;
- cooperation in technical issues and know-how transfer regarding the citizens' right to free access to public information, government-citizens interaction, control of the legitimacy and effectiveness of public administration actions and the establishment of public-private sector partnerships;
- achieving further progress in policy integration, addressing issues of central government to maximize the effectiveness of government action in protecting public interest (transparency, policy coherence, etc.);
- sharing experience on regulatory reform and management including the use of independent regulatory authorities and on managing the policy implications of designing independent institutions in relation to the rest of the governance system (ministries, parliament, judicial authorities);
- exchange of legislative and other normative legal acts as well as sharing experience with European organizations in legislative development to underpin democracy and the rule of law, human rights, civil society and the freedom of media, as well as the operation of a free market economy;
- cooperative measures in view of judicial improvement and interaction in meeting international standards, requirements and norms;

We further intend to promote effective policy formulation and capacity building to secure successful collaboration of national authorities given the range of commitments of the Member States resulting from the BSEC agreements in force: namely those on Collaboration on Emergency Assistance and Emergency Response (1998) and on Cooperation in Combating Crime in Particular in its Organized Forms (1998) and its Additional Protocols. We will further explore the possibilities for institutional renewal and government improvement offered by BSEC Agreements;

We support the implementation of joint projects in the BSEC Member States involving intergovernmental – *inter alia*, the United Nations, the European Union, the Council of Europe, the OECD – and non-governmental organizations and ask the ICBSS to continue assisting in the preparatory work of joint programs and the building of key regional networks;

We invite the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to approve the establishment of a Working Group in order to institutionalize regional cooperation in the field of institutional renewal and good governance, to implement and promote cooperation on the basis of this Declaration and *inter alia*, to submit recommendations and guidelines in creating short and mid-term action plans for specific aspects of building government capacity;

We express our appreciation and gratitude to the Government of the Hellenic Republic and in particular to the Ministry of Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice for having taken the initiative of this Meeting and for their hospitality in Athens.

This Joint Declaration was adopted in Athens, on 21 February 2005.