

DECLARATION

**OF THE MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES**

Baku, 3 December 2014

We, the Ministers in charge of Science and Technology of the Member States of the Organisation of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), met in Baku on 3 December 2014,

Fully aware of the role of our Organization as a mechanism for developing multilateral cooperation in the region,

Confident that science and technology are major assets for sustainable social and economic development and that the BSEC Member States, based on their rich and long-lasting tradition, are willing to devote particular attention for the further development and strengthening of that field, both at national level and in the Organization as a whole,

Desiring to renew the commitment of the BSEC Member States to cooperate in the development of science and technology and to reconfirm the policy orientations for such cooperation, taking into consideration the developments in the policy landscape in the BSEC region,

Reaffirming that science and technology is one of the priority areas for the development of mutually beneficial BSEC-EU interaction,

Recalling the Declaration of the Ministers responsible for Science and Technology of the BSEC Member States adopted in Sofia, on 9 April 2010, and taking note of the activities of BSEC carried out in this field since its adoption,

Guided by the BSEC Economic Agenda: Towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership, adopted by the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States, in Belgrade, on 11 June 2012, and endorsed by the Heads of State and Government of the BSEC Member States, in Istanbul, on 26 June 2012,

Have declared our commitment to:

1. *Invest* our best efforts in the enhancement of the regional dimension of the cooperation among the BSEC Member States in the agreed areas of action and specific activities, particularly by:

a) Focusing on human resources, capacity building, research infrastructure and innovation as priority areas of action;

b) Developing a registry of national innovation related structures of the BSEC Member States and improving the conditions for their effective interaction;

c) Encouraging joint research and training and exchange programmes among the Scientific Institutions and Universities in the Member States in line with their as well as BSEC agreed common priorities;

d) Identifying within legislation innovative ways for combining allocated public and private funds, including through public-private partnerships, and facilitating the access to other available financial resources;

e) Facilitating closer cooperation in the fields of Science and Technology among the BSEC Member States, the BSEC Related Bodies and with other partners and international organizations in order to encourage co-funding schemes for formulating and implementing regional research projects; and participating in international projects and programmes;

2. **Ensure** that the cooperation within the BSEC through benchmarking activities, exchange of good practices, sharing experiences, etc. become instrumental and thus boost the development and implementation of national future-oriented Science and Technology policies as a major driving force of dynamic and sustainable economic growth and prosperity for the peoples of the region;

3. **Undertake** further steps towards consolidating the project-oriented dimension of the regional cooperation in the fields of Science and Technology by implementing the already existing and identifying new projects of common interest for the Member States and promoting the dissemination of relevant information concerning the operation of the BSEC Project Development Fund and the Guidelines for the BSEC Project Management Unit which will also increase productivity and efficiency of the Organization as a whole;

4. **Promote** a dynamic dialogue among stakeholders in the science and technology community – research and development organisations, industry, user groups – in order to ensure their cost-effective and result-oriented interaction for the purpose of converting scientific discoveries into innovative, commercially viable products and processes;

5. **Encourage** the mobility of students, academic staff and researchers across the BSEC region within the framework of appropriate projects and programmes;

6. **Encourage** also national authorities of the BSEC Member States to provide open or relevant information, training and other services for project preparation with a view to their submission for funding from international organizations and institutions;

7. **Exploit** the results achieved during the implementation of the second BSEC Action Plan on Cooperation in Science and Technology (2010-2014) and emphasize the need for more structured and systematic cooperation among the Member States in the future;

8. **Reaffirm** the commitment to strengthen our cooperation and develop synergies with the BSEC Related Bodies, international and regional organizations and initiatives as such partnerships and synergies bring additional value and strength to BSEC and increase the potential of the Black Sea region in the field of Science and Technology;

9. **Attach** the particular importance to developing collaboration between the BSEC and the EU, and to this end, to make use of potential that the interaction between them can bring about in the field of Science and Technology;

And therefore,

10. **Approve** the third BSEC Action Plan on Cooperation in Science and Technology (2014-2018) as a means of achieving the goals set forth in this Declaration.

11. **Request** the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Science and Technology to undertake more practical steps for the effective implementation of the provisions of the present Declaration and the third BSEC Action Plan on Cooperation in Science and Technology;

12. **Agree** to convene a mid-term meeting of the Ministers in charge of Science and Technology of the BSEC Member States to review progress in the implementation of the approved Action Plan and to chart the way forward;

We express our gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan for the organization of the Meeting and for the hospitality extended.
