



BS/CT/WG/R(2007)1

**REPORT OF THE
MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON
COOPERATION IN TOURISM**

Belgrade, 26-27 April 2007

1. The Meeting of the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism was held in Belgrade on 26-27 April 2007.
2. H.E. Dr. Bojan DIMITRIJEVIĆ, Minister of Trade, Tourism and Services of the Republic of Serbia delivered an opening statement. The text of the statement is attached to the present Report as Annex I.
3. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Branko MARJANAC, Deputy Director, Directorate for Multilateral Economic Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia.
4. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the following BSEC Member States:

Republic of Azerbaijan
Georgia
Hellenic Republic
Romania
Russian Federation
Republic of Serbia
Republic of Turkey
Ukraine
5. The representative of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of BSEC (PABSEC) also participated in the Meeting.

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

6. The draft agenda of the Meeting was discussed and adopted. The agenda, as adopted, is attached as Annex III.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COUNCIL AND THE FOLLOW-UP OF THE JOINT

STATEMENTS ADOPTED BY THE MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR TOURISM OF THE MEMBER STATES:

7. The Working Group took note of the information provided by the BSEC PERMIS representative on the following-up the Resolution of the 15th Council with regard to the activities of the Working Groups.

8. The Country-Coordinator took a commitment to present the Report on the Implementation of the Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations of the Council and the Follow-up of the Joint Statements adopted by the Ministers Responsible for Tourism of the BSEC Member States one month prior to the next Meeting of the BSEC Council to be held in second half of October 2007.

PROGRESS ACHIEVED SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF THE BSEC WORKING GROUP ON TOURISM (ISTANBUL, OCTOBER 2006), ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN OF THE WORKING GROUP ON COOPERATION IN TOURISM, ADOPTED IN MARCH 2005

a) General overview

9. The Representative of the Country-Coordinator presented the participants of the Working Group the Evolution Report on the Activities of the Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism for the period 2004-2006. The Representative of Romania outlined the necessity to include in the Evolution Report the Tourism Salon organized in Bucharest in April 2006.

b) Ongoing activities:

- Establishment of the Standing Secretariat on Cooperation in the Hellenic Republic

10. The Country-Coordinator informed the Working Group on “Ongoing activities related to the establishment of the Standing Secretariat on Cooperation in Tourism in the Hellenic Republic”.

11. The Country-Coordinator took a commitment to come out with a final assessment on the establishment of the Standing Secretariat on Cooperation in Tourism in Athens at the next Meeting of the Working Group.

- Preparations for launching “Argo” ship

12. The Country-Coordinator informed that the launching of “Argo” ship scheduled for June 2007 has been postponed.

PRESENTATION BY THE COUNTRY-COORDINATOR (HELLENIC REPUBLIC) OF THE NEW TWO YEAR ACTION PLAN ON COOPERATION IN TOURISM (2006-2008), AS A FOLLOW-UP OF THE MARCH 2005-2007 ACTION PLAN

13. The Country-Coordinator presented the Draft Action Plan (November 2006 - November 2008) for the Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism.

14. The Action Plan with amendments has been approved by the Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism and submitted for the endorsement respectively to the Committee of Senior Officials and the 17th BSEC Council. The text of the Final Draft Action Plan is attached as Annex IV.

PRESENTATION AND CONSIDERATION OF IDEAS AND PROJECTS AMONG BSEC MEMBER STATES IN THE FIELD OF TOURISM (FOLLOW-UP OF ELABORATION OF THE PROPOSALS OF NATIONAL DELEGATIONS AGREED AT THE MEETING OF THE WG ON COOPERATION IN TOURISM IN BUCHAREST IN APRIL 2006 AND IN ISTANBUL IN OCTOBER 2006)

15. The Working Group discussed ideas and concrete commitments from previous meetings of the Working Group and expressed their willingness to define priorities for future work.

a) State of affairs in regards to publishing a brochure on Tourism in BSEC Countries

16. The Representative of Romania informed that due to objective reasons, the brochure on Tourism in BSEC Countries could not be reprinted as it was agreed at the previous Meeting of the Working Group held in Istanbul in October 2006.

b) Creating a Common Marketing Council of BSEC

17. The Representative of Georgia as a follow-up of the commitment taken at the Meeting of the Working Group in Istanbul in October 2006, further elaborated on the proposal of the creation of Common Marketing Council of BSEC, aiming to promote the Black Sea as an integrated tourist destination, provided that there is no overlapping with the activities of the to-be-established Standing Secretariat on Cooperation in Tourism in the Hellenic Republic. The presentation of the Georgian delegation is attached as Annex V.

18. The Representative of Georgian Department of Tourism and Resorts reiterated the invitation to the representatives of tourism authorities of the BSEC Member States to attend a Meeting in Batumi, Georgia, in September 2007, aimed to discuss the organizational and legal aspects of this proposal.

19. The issue of creation of a common tourist logo for the whole of the BSEC region was raised with no final decision on it.

c) Assessment on possibilities for providing “Visa Facilitation for Tourism in the BSEC Member States”

20. The Working Group stressed the importance of Visa Facilitation for Tourism in the BSEC Member States.

21. The Representative of the Hellenic Republic informed the Working Group on the organization of the Workshop on “Visa Facilitation for Cooperation between EU and the Wider Black Sea Area” to be held in the island of Kos of the Hellenic Republic, on 18-19 May 2007.

d) Participation at Tourist Events and Fairs held in the other Member States

22. The Working Group stressed the importance of regularly exchanging information on tourist events and fairs organized in their countries in order to ensure the participation of as many Member States as possible.

23. Some of the delegations informed the Working Group on the data of holding such events in their countries and it was generally accepted to communicate further information on the issue through BSEC PERMIS.

CONSIDERATION OF THE PROJECT APPLICATION FOR A PDF FUNDING

24. The participants at the Working Group took note of the Project Application entitled “South Caucasian Medicinal Herbs Route” (submitted by the UNDP offices of the Republic of Turkey – lead partner, Georgia and the Republic of Armenia) and decided to return to BSEC PERMIS for further assessment.

MARITIME TOURISM AND COOPERATION AMONG MEMBER STATES

25. The Country-Coordinator provided the information on the issue particularly emphasizing on the existing legislation in the Hellenic Republic regulating the issues of construction and operation of tourist ports. It also provided the Member States with the respective legislative documentation on the issue.

26. The Working Group agreed to encourage the participation of the representatives of the Member States public sector, responsible for maritime and nautical tourism in the Working Group’s meetings, on a regular basis.

27. These representatives should elaborate, starting from the next Meeting of the Working Group in Istanbul, matters concerning the legal framework, the quality of services, environmental issues, promotional issues etc. related to the operation of tourist ports in their countries in order to reach to common principles of development of the maritime and nautical tourism in the BSEC area.

REVIEW AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON NATIONAL POLICIES AND BEST PRACTICES IN THE FIELD OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN BSEC COUNTRIES

28. The Hellenic delegation in its capacity as Country-Coordinator of the Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism informed briefly on UNWTO and the European Commission major activities and recent initiatives, and undertook the obligation to communicate the Report of the Tourism Sustainability Group entitled “Action for More Sustainable European Tourism” to PERMIS.

ACTIVITIES RELATIVE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CLOSER COOPERATION BETWEEN THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NATIONAL AUTHORITIES OF TOURISM INDUSTRIES AND PROFESSIONAL AGENCIES

29. The Working Group agreed to further develop cooperation between Governmental Authorities and private sector thus attracting the attention of national tour operators to possibilities of cooperation within BSEC framework.

30. The Representative of the Republic of Turkey informed on the necessity of inviting the private sector at the next Meeting of the Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism, including the President of the Balkan Federation of the Associations of Travel Agencies (BAFTAA).

31. The Representative of Romania informed on the national practice on establishing closer cooperation between the representatives of the national authorities of tourism industries and professional agencies, pointing out the support of public sector to the private agencies.

32. The Working Group agreed on the need to provide active engagement of private organizations working in the field of tourism in the Black Sea region and to secure their participation in the meetings of the Working Group, more specially with regard of the Protocol of Cooperation between the Association of Travel Agencies and Tour Operators signed within the BSEC Organization.

33. The Working Group agreed that at the next Meeting of the Group in Istanbul the representatives of the private sector should be engaged in order to make more sustainable cooperation among tourist organizations.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

34. The Country-Coordinator of the Working Group informed that Mrs. Maria TASSIOU, Deputy Director of the Directorate of International Relations of the Ministry of Tourism of the Hellenic Republic (tel: +30210 6964655; fax: +30210 6910402; e-mail: tasiou_m@mintour.gr) was designated as Focal Person for the Chairman-in-Office and the Member States for the Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism.

35. The Representative of the Republic of Turkey proposed that the next Meeting of the Working Group to be held in October 2007 in Istanbul.

Forthcoming Tourist Events:

36. The Representative of the Republic of Turkey made a presentation on a “Culture Tourism Seminar to BSEC Countries” to be held in Istanbul on 28-29 June 2007, at which it was launched the invitation of participation.

37. The Working Group appreciated the holding the Seminar and stressed the importance that the culture tourism has on the overall of the tourism activities.

38. The Representative of the Russian Federation informed on the Third Conference “Development of Resort and Tourist Infrastructure in the Black Sea Region” to be held in Gelendjik, the Russian Federation, in September 2007, at which it was launched the invitation of participation.

39. The Representative of Romania informed on the main cultural and tourism events which are organized during 2007:

- “Sibiu Cultural Capital City of 2007”;
- the International Musical Festival “George Enescu”.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

40. The Participants expressed their gratitude to the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Services of the Republic of Serbia for the hospitality extended to them in Belgrade and the excellent organization of the Meeting.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE MEETING

41. The Working Group adopted the present Report and submitted it for consideration to the next Meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials of BSEC Member States.
