

**DECLARATION  
OF THE MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF TOURISM  
OF THE MEMBER STATES OF  
THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION**  
*(Athens, 15 November 2010)*

We, the Ministers in charge of Tourism / Heads of the Tourism Administrations of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, namely:

Republic of Albania  
Republic of Armenia  
Republic of Azerbaijan  
Republic of Bulgaria  
Georgia  
Hellenic Republic  
Republic of Moldova  
Romania  
Russian Federation  
Republic of Serbia  
Republic of Turkey  
Ukraine

Recognizing the importance of tourism in promoting economic development, mutual understanding, goodwill and close relations among peoples,

Acknowledging the significant role of tourism in protecting and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage leading towards sustainable development,

Considering the efforts taken on a permanent basis by the BSEC Member States in the development of cooperation in the field of tourism in the BSEC area,

Taking into account the provisions of the Rhodes Declaration of the Ministers of Tourism of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, adopted on 31 March 2005,

Recognizing the importance of visa facilitation procedures which could contribute to the promotion of tourism within the Black Sea region with a view to discuss the issue with the relevant authorities of the BSEC Member States.

We declare our intention:

- 1.** to intensify our efforts with a view to positioning the BSEC area as a tourism destination to the world tourism market and to stimulate as well as strengthen the image of our region as a unique and attractive destination,
- 2.** to further develop the cooperation between the tourism professionals, the tourism organizations and associations and the travel and tourism agencies of the BSEC Member States, in order to promote traveling within the BSEC region and attract more tourists from other countries,
- 3.** to ensure tourism promotion within a broadest strategy of sustainable development,
- 4.** to encourage cooperation in the field of Special Interest Tourism, where appropriate, through existing or new projects, mainly in the areas of:
  - a.** cultural tourism projects, namely: “The Route of the Rose” (Bulgaria), “The Routes of Coinage” (Greece), “Cultural Route of the Roman Emperors” (Serbia), “The Silk Road” (Turkey), “Myths of the Two Seas” (Azerbaijan), “Wine Routes of Azerbaijan” (Azerbaijan), “Vine and Wine Routes Project” (Armenia), “Legend of Argonauts” (Georgia),
  - b.** maritime tourism, including yachting and cruising, as a vehicle for the enhancement of tourism in the BSEC area, ensuring its competitiveness in the framework of international agreements and regulations,
  - c.** winter and sports tourism including exchange of experience and know-how concerning ski resort infrastructure and management, as well as the promotion of leisure sports activities all year round,
  - d.** health, spa and wellness tourism, including exchange of expertise developing natural thermal springs, spas and thalassotherapy centers,
  - e.** business tourism with an emphasis on the MICE tourism activities – meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions – within the BSEC Member States and in other countries,
- 5.** to encourage the relevant authorities of the BSEC Member States to undertake initiatives with a view to protecting the environment of the Black Sea region for the benefit of tourism development in the area,
- 6.** to organize tourism training programmes and training exchanges for the personnel employed in the tourism sector and to encourage synergies among tourism educational institutions, in order to achieve higher quality of services in the region,

7. to exchange statistical information and to publish an annual report for tourism activities of the BSEC Member States,
8. to continue our close cooperation with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the European Union and other international organizations or entities related to tourism, in order to benefit from their experience and know-how and in order to promote tourism in the Black Sea region worldwide.

We underline the importance of tourism in promoting people to people contacts. In this context, we stress the beneficial role of visa facilitation as a tool of advancing mobility issues in the Black Sea region. We welcome the progress achieved so far in this field and underline the need for further cooperation and coordination.

We welcome the willingness of the Hellenic Republic, as the only Schengen Member of the BSEC Organization, to undertake initiatives in order to introduce simplified visa procedures for tourists of the BSEC Member States.

We agree to meet, whenever appropriate, to follow-up the decisions taken and to consider the matters related to tourism cooperation among the BSEC Member States.

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

Athens, 15 November 2010