

**DECLARATION  
OF THE MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF TOURISM  
OF THE MEMBER STATES OF  
THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION**

*(Athens, 23 October 2014)*

*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 (BSEC),*

*Taking into account that tourism has been a significant area of cooperation among the BSEC Member States since the very inception of the BSEC Organization,*

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

*Desiring to promote and position the BSEC region as an appealing leisure and business destination and increase its attractiveness for tourism investments,*

*Acknowledging the dynamic nature of tourism, the shifting travel patterns and the changing behaviour and preferences of modern travellers,*

*Affirming the necessity to enrich and diversify the tourism product and add value to the tourism offering in the BSEC Member States in order to attract tourists from within and outside the region and meet their needs, by putting forward the rich natural and cultural – tangible and intangible - cultural heritage of the BSEC Member States and providing authentic long-lasting experiences to visitors,*

*Considering the growing intense competition between tourist destinations and the impact of the global economic crisis on tourism value chain and products, challenges can only be tackled efficiently through a cooperative effort and regional partnerships,*

*Recognizing that in the face of the lingering global economic recession, tourism is a resilient sector, which, given its transversal and cross-cutting nature, could be integrated into other sectoral policies in the BSEC Member States, thus helping national economies rebound,*

*Wishing to encourage the development of certain forms of Special Interest Tourism in the BSEC Member States, such as gastronomic and wine tourism and film-induced tourism, in a sustainable way by leveraging the economic and social benefits deriving from them,*

*Acknowledging the advantages and the opportunities arising from the promotion of the aforementioned forms of tourism such as increase in tourist flows and job creation, regional development, local authentic food production, community empowerment and destination branding,*

*Desiring* to enhance close cooperation between BSEC and other International and Regional Organizations and Initiatives on tourism related issues,

*Considering* the role of facilitation of visa issuance as means to spur tourism growth and job creation,

*Guided* by the “BSEC Economic Agenda: Towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership”, in particular by its Goal 8 “Development of Tourism and Protection of Cultural Heritage”, endorsed at the BSEC 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary summit in Istanbul on 26 June 2012,

*Taking stock of* the Kyiv Declaration of the Ministers in charge of Tourism of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, adopted on 10 October 2013,

*Based* on the priorities of the Hellenic BSEC Chairmanship-in-Office on cooperation in the field of tourism,

*Welcoming* the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between BSEC and UNWTO,

***We declare our intention to:***

1. *Encourage* the National Authorities in charge of Tourism in the BSEC Member States to better coordinate their actions in order to promote the BSEC region as one of the leading tourism destinations of the world as well as an attractive region for investments in the tourism sector.
2. *Explore* the possibilities to promote visa and other travel facilitation, which would allow visitors from within and outside the BSEC region to move freely and efficiently towards and within the region.
3. *Enhance* the regional dimension of the cooperation in the field of tourism among the BSEC Member States, inter alia, by:
  - a) developing film-induced tourism and gastronomic and wine tourism in a sustainable way, as high-value forms of Special Interest Tourism, along with other forms of niche tourism, such as agritourism, rural and cultural tourism, wellness and spa tourism,
  - b) exploring the possibility of establishing a network among regional or national, public or private organizations, professional associations and educational institutions from the BSEC Member States, which are involved in promoting gastronomic and wine tourism in their regions/countries, in order to allow the exchange of know-how and best practices,
  - c) encouraging partnerships between local growers/producers and local restaurant and hotel food buyers and chefs,

d) promoting transnational cooperation on joint projects on gastronomic and wine tour itineraries in the BSEC region, in order to strengthen the gastronomic identity and cooking culture of the region,

e) encouraging regional and local authorities as well as Destination Management Organizations to elaborate, when appropriate, film marketing action plans and gastronomy and wine marketing campaigns, in order to enhance the visibility of their destinations,

f) stimulating their national competent authorities to explore possible ways of creating a favourable business environment for film and TV productions, considering the existing incentives policies, in order to promote their countries/regions abroad as possible filming locations,

g) encouraging their national/ regional competent authorities, national/regional film commissions and other film industry stakeholders in the BSEC Member States, to cooperate with the tourism industry stakeholders and provide valid information and support to potential foreign film and TV producers,

h) stimulating their national associations of travel and tourism agencies to encourage their members to create innovative, customized, thematic tourism products or packages addressed to special interest tourists from within and outside the BSEC region, who seek authentic, meaningful and personalized experiences.

4. *Consider* ways of effective implementation of the aforementioned Memorandum of Understanding between BSEC and UNWTO, signed in Athens on 23 October 2014, with a view to promoting the collaboration between the two Organizations.

5. *Instruct* the BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism to:

a) follow up the progress and the effective implementation of the provisions of the present Declaration and the relevant Goal of the BSEC Economic Agenda;

b) exchange best practices/initiatives, innovative programmes and information, concerning:

- Film-induced tourism;
- National, regional and local food and wine events (e.g. festivals, fairs, exhibitions, shows), taking place in the BSEC Member States;
- Conferences, seminars, symposia and workshops on gastronomy and wine;
- Established food and wine tour itineraries;
- Certification/Labelling systems for national, local and regional cuisines;
- Gastronomy and wine museums;

c) explore possibilities for developing joint projects in the field of sustainable tourism.

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 Government of the Hellenic Republic for the organization of the Meeting and for the hospitality extended.