

**IZMIR JOINT DECLARATION ON COOPERATION IN THE SPHERE OF
TRANSPORT IN THE BSEC REGION**

(28 November 2012, Izmir, Republic of Turkey)

We, the Ministers of Transport and the Ministers in charge of Transport of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), gathering in Izmir on 28 November 2012, under the framework of the Turkish Chairmanship-in-Office of BSEC,

Referring to the *Istanbul Summit Declaration* adopted on the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the BSEC,

Stressing the need and importance of full and timely implementation of the measures pertaining to the development of cooperation in the field of transport, as reflected in the Joint Declarations previously adopted by the Ministers of Transport of the BSEC Member States,

Bearing in mind that BSEC, throughout its two decades of existence, has become an influential, project-oriented and result-based regional organization that has enhanced regional cooperation and substantially contributed to mutual understanding among the Member States,

Recalling that the main theme of the Turkish Chairmanship-in-Office is “*From Regional Cooperation to a Zone of Prosperity*”, providing a comprehensive vision to realize BSEC’s full potential for achieving closer cooperation, greater stability and prosperity in its region,

Conscious of the growing importance of the Black Sea region due to its highly strategic location at the heart of Eurasia that connects major transportation and trade routes as well as crucial energy corridors,

Recognizing that transport plays a vital role in promoting trade, investments and tourism within the BSEC region,

Highlighting that far-reaching interconnectivity and interoperability of regional transport systems among the BSEC Member States are vital in order to achieve safer, more efficient and more reliable international trade,

Acknowledging the necessity to intensify efforts for the removal of both physical and non-physical barriers against the free movement of passengers and goods in the BSEC Region,

Welcoming International Union of Road Transport’s (IRU) efforts to modernize customs facilities at the border crossing points by establishing TIR-EPD “green lanes”, introducing “one window” operation’s technology and modernization of customs clearance mechanisms at the borders for international road transport,

Reiterating the need to promote and develop a coordinated and uninterrupted intermodal transport and logistics system within BSEC and outside the region and with its neighboring regions,

Taking note of the progress achieved in the implementation of the Memoranda of Understanding on the Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region, on the Development of the Motorways of the Sea at the BSEC Region, on the Coordinated Development of the Black Sea Ring Highway, as well as the work of the relevant Steering Committees and the Ad-Hoc Working Groups,

Considering the importance of cooperation in civil aviation in the BSEC Region without prejudice to the international obligations of its member states,

Reaffirming the economic and environmentally sound aspects as well as the strategic importance of maritime transport in relieving the traffic burden on the road transport,

Emphasizing the growing necessity of implementing sustainable development strategies to reduce the adverse impacts of transport on the environment and to combat climate change through the promotion and use of regionally integrated policy approaches,

Affirming the importance of utilization of advanced innovative technologies notably intelligent transportation systems (ITS) in order to increase the performance and service quality of the transport system on a regional scale,

Noting the importance of further measures to be taken by the BSEC Member States to raise awareness of road safety issues as well as to reduce the road traffic fatalities and casualties in the region within the framework of the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020) proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 64 / 255 of 2 March 2010 and the Ioannina Declaration of 19 November 2010,

Committed to strengthening cooperation in the sphere of transport with other international and regional organizations,

Reaffirming the importance of promoting business relations in the region to facilitate implementation of transport infrastructure projects,

Reviewing the results of the Meeting of the Transport Working Group on 26-27 November 2012 in which transport issues of common concern were discussed and noting the recommendations brought up therein,

Have agreed to;

1. **Affirm** our intention to intensify joint efforts for promotion of efficient, environmentally-sound, safe, secure, integrated and sustainable transport systems in the BSEC Member States which will, in turn, result in achieving more efficient use of trade and tourism opportunities among the BSEC countries and accelerating regional transport cooperation.
2. **Ensure** the progressive implementation of the provisions of the Memoranda of Understanding on the Coordinated Development of the Black Sea Ring Highway, the Development of the Motorways of the Sea in the BSEC Region, as well as the Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region.

3. **Enhance** the cooperation and interaction with other related international and regional organizations, institutions and initiatives with a view to increasing the transport potential of the region.
4. **Invite** the Member States to strengthen the project-oriented dimension of the Organization with joint tangible transport projects to the benefit of the whole region, with the purpose of enhancing interconnectivity of infrastructures and interoperability of transport activities.
5. **Appreciate** BSEC Member States' efforts on facilitation of international road transport and border crossing procedures on the basis of accession to the international trade and road transport facilitation agreements including UNECE Conventions.
6. **Note** the outcomes of the Pilot Project on BSEC Transit Permit for the facilitation of international road transport of goods in the BSEC Region and the willingness of the interested BSEC Member States to continue the Project on a permanent basis.
7. **Take** appropriate measures to enhance investment along the routes of Black Sea Ring Highway by means of supporting, at national and multilateral levels, the actualization of promising and efficient projects that are directed towards the development of main and ancillary road infrastructure.
8. **Take further steps** for the development and the promotion of the Model Highway Initiative in accordance with the decision taken earlier in Moscow on 21 October 2011.
9. **Encourage** joint studies for long-term Asia-Europe transport development plans aiming at further development of transport infrastructure, multimodal transport connections and logistics centers as well as sea ports in the BSEC Region that would present additional transport options to the current and future trade flows between the BSEC Member States, Europe and Asia.
10. **Support** public and private stakeholders to integrate into maritime connected multimodal transport activities including Ro-Ro, ferry and passengers transportation.
11. **Acknowledge** the assignment of the Republic of Turkey for the first seat of the Joint Technical Secretariat of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Development of the Motorways of the Sea.
12. **Explore** the possibilities to develop cooperation in civil aviation without prejudice to international obligations of the BSEC Member States, on regulatory/legal issues, vocational training, maintenance, ground handling and airport management and encourage co-operation opportunities among civil aviation authorities and service providers.
13. **Underline** the essential role of research, innovation and ITS's for smooth flow of international transport and in monitoring and evaluating the effects of prospective implementations.
14. **Promote** the organization of regional training seminars, round table meetings, conferences so as to establish an environment to exchange views on national experiences and best practices in specific transport subjects among experts of the BSEC Member States, other states and international organizations.

15. **Welcome** the valuable inputs of the BSEC Observers and Sectoral Dialogue Partners to BSEC activities and **invite** them to continue their substantial contributions to BSEC.
16. **Foster** business relations in the Region to further advance economic cooperation among BSEC Member States, and to facilitate implementation of transport infrastructure projects on the basis of public-private partnership.

The Ministers expressed their gratitude to the Government and the people of the Republic of Turkey for their warm hospitality and the outstanding organization of the Meeting of the Ministers of Transport of the BSEC Member States in Izmir.