



Annex VII to BS/TM/R(2001)1

**JOINT STATEMENT
OF THE MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT
OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES**

(Sochi, 30 March 2001)

On the kind invitation of the Minister of Transport of the Russian Federation, the Ministers of Transport of the BSEC Member States met in Sochi on 30 March 2001.

The meeting was also attended by the representatives of the BSEC Parliamentary Assembly, BSEC Observer States, international and regional organizations (UN/ECE), NGO's (BRASS).

The Ministers evaluated the current situation in the field of transport in their countries and in the BSEC region and exchanged views on the further activities of the BSEC Member States in this field.

The Ministers confirmed the adherence of their countries to the common approach towards development of an efficient and sustainable transport system in economic and social terms in the BSEC region. In this regard the Ministers recalled the importance of various decisions taken by the Second and Third Pan-European Transport Conferences (Crete, March 1994; Helsinki, June 1997), Conference of the Ministers of Transport of the BSEC and the CEI Countries (Sofia, 21-22 November 1996), TRACECA-BSEC Transport Conference (Tbilisi, 8-9 April 1997), Conference of the Ministers of Transport of the Black Sea Region (Kyiv, 16 May 1997), International Conference on Restoration of the Historic Silk Route (Baku, 7-8 September 1998), the First Conference of the Intergovernmental TRACECA Commission (Tbilisi, 10-11 March 2000), the First and the Second International Euro-Asian Conference on Transport (St. Petersburg, 12-13 May 1998; St. Petersburg, 12-13 September 2000), and other relevant international conferences and meetings in the field of transport;

The Ministers shared the view that the establishment of coherent, efficient, safe and sustainable transport links in the BSEC region requires the harmonization of national transport legislation and regulations with the provisions of international transport agreements and conventions, facilitation and harmonization of customs and other border-crossing procedures, co-ordinated development of relevant transport infrastructure and further activities on transport issues, including those developed by the United Nations, European Union (EU) and other international organizations and fora;

The Ministers recognized the significance of activities implemented by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE), EU, European Conference of the Ministers of Transport (ECMT), Permanent Secretariat of the IGC TRACECA, Organization for Railway Cooperation (OSZhD), Coordination Transport Meeting of the Ministers of Transport of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Council of Railway Transport of the CIS Member States, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Bulgaria, IFIs and other international organizations and regional cooperation initiatives concerned with the development of the transport network of the BSEC region and its integration within the European and Asian networks;

The Ministers underlined the importance of the fact that with the entry into force of the BSEC Charter and the transformation of BSEC into full-fledged regional organization, Member States have received an important instrument for enhancing cooperation in the transport field and raising it on a qualitatively higher level to meet the needs of the BSEC region.

The Ministers emphasized that joint efforts should be made in order to take measures to promote sustainable transport systems, including multimodal transport networks, in the BSEC Member States, to help reduce regional disparities and to connect the BSEC region transport infrastructure to the European and Asian transport infrastructure networks.

The Ministers welcomed the work done by the BSEC Working Group on Transport during the previous period and expressed their common view that the activities of the WG on Transport should be concentrated on the vital problems of the BSEC Region in the transport field.

The Ministers affirmed that with the purpose to meet fully the interests of the Parties in the transport infrastructure issues, the BSEC shall cooperate with relevant international organizations and structures in order to coordinate the ongoing activities in the field of transport aiming at fully reflecting the interest of the Parties in the transport infrastructure field. In this respect, they underlined the importance of the support of the IFIs in achieving the objectives in transport field.

The Ministers supported the transport projects in the framework of the TRACECA Program for the economic integration of the region and the work done in this field by the IGC-TRACECA.

The Ministers took note of the proposal of the Russian Delegation about the possibility of the international use of the Volga-Don Navigation Channel as an element of connection of transport networks of the Caspian and BSEC regions.

The Russian Side informed the Ministers of Transport of the BSEC Member States about its work on the establishment of the project “North-South” and its intention to join the TRACECA project.

The Ministers stressed the importance of the work done by the Steering Committee of the Black Sea PETrA in further strengthening international cooperation in the Black Sea Transport Area.

The Ministers emphasized the importance of extending the transport corridors crossing the BSEC region and integrating it with the European and Asian markets.

The Ministers adopted the Transport Action Plan for the BSEC elaborated by the Working Group on Transport as a general framework for the cooperation of the BSEC Member States in

the field of transport with the inclusion of the Black Sea Ring Corridor with connections to BSEC Member States.

The Ministers recommended that the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States instructs the BSEC Working Group on Transport to elaborate a set of activities aiming at the full implementation of the Transport Action Plan for the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.

The Ministers recommended that the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the BSEC Member States instructs the BSEC Working Group on Transport to continue the elaboration of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Facilitation of the Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC region aimed at enhancing co-operation among the BSEC Member States towards the harmonisation of certain key-elements concerning international road transport of goods in the region, in line with internationally accepted agreements, as well as related rules and standards, inter alia, by simplifying and harmonizing procedures, formalities and documentation taking also into account the relevant work done in other international and regional organizations or initiatives.

The Ministers welcomed the work of the Black Sea Region Association of Shipbuilders and Shiprepairers (BRASS) and the Black Sea International Shipowners Association (BINSIA) as well as other NGOs working in the same field for development of the maritime transport and acknowledged the difficulties in this area of activity.

The Ministers requested the Minister of Transport of the Russian Federation to bring the results of this Conference to the attention of the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs.