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PRESS RELEASE ON
THE MEETING OF THE BSEC MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT
(Belgrade, 1 November 2016)

The Meeting of the Ministers of the BSEC Member States in Charge of Transport was held in Belgrade, the Republic of Serbia, on 1 November 2016.

It was chaired by H.E. Mr. Miodrag POLEDICA, State Secretary, Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure of the Republic of Serbia and attended by the representatives of the BSEC Member States, Related Bodies, Observers and Sectoral Dialogue Partners, as well as the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the International Road Transport Union and the International Union of Railways.

H.E. Mr. Miodrag POLEDICA, State Secretary, Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure of the Republic of Serbia, and H.E. Ambassador Michael B. CHRISTIDES, Secretary General of the BSEC PERMIS, delivered opening statements.

In his statement, Secretary General CHRISTIDES underlined that for a regional organization like BSEC, establishing connectivity among its Member States is a prerequisite for promoting economic cooperation among them.

The Secretary General stated that BSEC and its Member States have the responsibility to be actively involved in the giant transport infrastructure projects materializing around the Black Sea region, including the modern Silk Road initiative, stressing that no route can connect Asia to Europe without passing through "BSEC territory".

The Secretary General highlighted the achievements of BSEC in the transports sector, which includes the facilitation of the road transport of goods; the streamlining – diminishing of documentation needed to cross borders; the exchange of vital information; the establishment of BSEC-URTA, a valuable tool in promoting cooperation among private companies; the promotion of intermodal transportation; and the signing of the the two Memoranda of Understanding on the flagship transport projects of BSEC, namely, the Black Sea Ring Highway (BSRH) and the Motorways of the Sea (MoS) projects. He expressed the readiness of the BSEC PERMIS to provide guidance and assistance in the preparation, implementation and promotion of bankable transport infrastructure projects.

The Heads of Delegations delivered statements regarding issues related to transport cooperation

within BSEC and developments in their countries and in the region.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Heads of Delegations adopted the *“Belgrade Joint Declaration on Prospects of Cooperation in the field of Transport in the BSEC Region - BSEC Region, Integrate to Grow, Partnership for the Future”*.

The Joint Declaration stipulates the continuation of the cooperation under the Memoranda on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region, on the Development of the Motorways of the Sea and the Coordinated Development of on the Black Sea Ring Highway, as well as other BSEC projects which are already underway. It envisages the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on the Development of Multimodal Ferry Lines in the Black Sea Region; the harmonization of transport documents in order to speed up the traffic flow in the region; the reduction of the physical and non-physical barriers arising during border crossings within the respective competences; improvement of the safety of international transport routes in the region; and the development of connectivity between transport and tourism. The Joint Declaration also draws attention to the importance of the active involvement of IFIs and the business community in the process of shaping proposals on transport projects, based on public-private partnerships mechanisms.

Secretary General Ambassador CHRISTIDES underlined that the BSEC PERMIS, with the help of Member States and other involved entities, will try to use this important Joint Declaration to inspire and lead to concrete action in enhancing transport cooperation in the BSEC region.