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PRESS RELEASE
ON THE UPCOMING 25th MEETING OF
THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION
(Moscow, 16 December 2011)

The 25th Meeting of the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) will be held on 16 December 2011 in Moscow. The meeting will be chaired by His Excellency Mr. Sergey LAVROV, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, in his capacity as the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization.

The representatives of the BSEC Member States¹, as well as Related Bodies², BSEC Observers³, Sectoral Dialogue Partners⁴ and other guests are expected to participate in and deliver statements at the meeting.

In the working session of the meeting, the Ministers will exchange views on issues of common concern to the region.

Some of the items on the agenda of the upcoming meeting in Moscow are related to the implementation of the BSEC Budget, the ongoing work on the updating of the BSEC Economic

¹ The 12 BSEC Member States are Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine.

² The Parliamentary Assembly of the BSEC (PABSEC), the BSEC Business Council (BSEC BC), the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank (BSTDB) and the International Center for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) are the four Related Bodies of BSEC.

³ Austria, Belarus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Egypt, France, Israel, Italy, Poland, Slovak Republic, Tunisia, USA, International Black Sea Club, Energy Charter Secretariat, Black Sea Commission and the Commission of the European Communities have Observer status in BSEC.

⁴ Hungary, Iran, Jordan, Montenegro, UK, Japan, Republic of Slovenia, Republic of Korea, Black Sea International Shipowners Association (BINSIA), Black and Azov Seas Ports Association (BASPA), Black Sea Region Association of Shipbuilders and Shiprepairers (BRASS), Danube Commission, International Network for SMEs (INSME), Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications (RCC) and the Black Sea Universities Network (BSUN) have Sectoral Dialogue Partnership status in BSEC.

Agenda for the Future, the conclusions of the International Conference “20 Years of BSEC at a Glance: Outcomes and Perspectives” which was organized in Moscow on 13 December 2011, appointments in the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat, the use of the BSEC Project Development Fund and BSEC Hellenic Development Fund for projects of regional impact, the appointment of Country-Coordinators for some of the BSEC Working Groups, the review of the cooperation among the Member States, the status of implementation of BSEC Council Resolutions, Decisions and Recommendations and the assessment of the activities of the Permanent International Secretariat as well as the Related Bodies of BSEC. During its Moscow Meeting, the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs is also expected to consider the applications for the renewal of Observer and Sectoral Dialogue Partnership status to various countries and organizations.

At the conclusion of the meeting, there will be a ceremony whereby the Russian Federation will hand over the Chairmanship-in-Office of BSEC to the Republic of Serbia. Serbia will officially assume the Chairmanship as of 1 January 2012, for a period of six months until 30 June 2012.

Background Information:

BSEC was launched as a regionally owned initiative, with Turkey’s lead, on 25 June 1992 at the Istanbul Summit, at a time when regional cooperation was most needed in the transformation process that the countries of the region were undergoing. The idea that stronger economic cooperation among the Black Sea countries would enhance peace and stability in the region was the underlying philosophy behind BSEC.

With the entry into force of its Charter in 1999, BSEC was officially transformed from an initiative into a regional cooperation organization.

Today, BSEC serves as a forum for cooperation in a wide range of areas and a platform for political dialogue for its 12 Member States. The BSEC countries which differ from each other in terms of their level of development, size and population encompass an area of approximately 20 million square kilometers with 330 million people. Transport, energy, trade, economic development, communications, education, culture, tourism, science and technology, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, institutional renewal and good governance, customs services and fight against organized crime are among the most active fields of cooperation within the framework of the Organization.

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