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PRESS RELEASE
ON
THE MEETING OF THE MINISTERS FOR EMERGENCY SITUATIONS AND
THE HEADS OF THE EMERGENCY SERVICES OF
THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

The Meeting of the Ministers for Emergency Situations and the Heads of the Emergency Services of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) was held in Sochi, on 7 October 2011.

During the meeting which was chaired by Mr. Vladimir PUCHKOV, State Secretary-Deputy Minister of Civil Defense, Emergencies and Disaster Relief of the Russian Federation, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations delivered general statements, assessed the developments and cooperation in the field of emergency situations and discussed the possibilities for further strengthening this cooperation.

Among the agenda items of the meeting was strengthening the capacity of emergency response to natural and man-made disasters, including the activity of the Network of Liaison Officers, in the face of global challenges such as climate change. The meeting also addressed the readiness of the emergency forces to provide safety for the 2014 Winter Olympic Games and Paralympic Games to be held in Sochi. Cooperation on prevention of seismic risk was also on the agenda.

At the conclusion of the meeting, a joint declaration was adopted which constitutes an ambitious road map to further enhance cooperation in emergency situations. In the adopted document, the Ministers agreed to strengthen the implementation of the BSEC Agreement on Collaboration in Emergency Assistance and Emergency Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters and its Additional Protocol for achieving a high level of preparedness for emergency situations in the region.

The joint declaration envisages the further strengthening of cooperation in humanitarian assistance and the eradication of the consequences of emergency situations.

An important part of the document is related to the proposal for the establishment of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Massive Forest Fires and the Ad Hoc Working Group on Floods and Torrents within BSEC, under the Working Group on Cooperation in Emergency Assistance.

The Working Group on Cooperation in Emergency Assistance which was established in 1998 is one of the most active Working Groups within BSEC. The BSEC Agreement on Collaboration in Emergency Assistance and Emergency Response to Natural and Man-made Disasters and its Additional Protocol

provide the legal basis for BSEC cooperation in this sphere. The BSEC Network of Liaison Officers on Emergency Assistance was created in 2009 The Ad Hoc Working Group of Experts on Seismic Risk was established in 2011 for early warning and to elaborate recommendations for rescue operations. Various regional trainings and seminars are organized in BSEC on the prevention of emergency situations and the elimination of their consequences.

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BSEC was launched 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. Today, BSEC serves as a forum for cooperation in a wide range of areas and a platform for political dialogue for its 12 Member States¹.

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