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PRESS RELEASE
ON
THE MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT OF THE BSEC MEMBER STATES

The Ministers of Transport of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) met in Moscow on 21 October 2011.

During the meeting which was chaired by H.E. Mr. Igor LEVITIN, the Minister of Transport of the Russian Federation, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations delivered general statements and discussed the current developments and prospects in the sphere of transport in the Black Sea region.

At the conclusion of the meeting, a joint declaration was adopted. In the adopted document titled the "Moscow Joint Declaration on Strengthening the Co-operation in the Field of Transport in the BSEC Region: Towards safe, secure, coherent and efficient transport system in the Black Sea region," the Ministers appreciated the initiative regarding the development of modern competitive Ro-Ro, ferry and cruise lines in the region.

The Ministers also decided to establish cross-sector cooperation between the BSEC Working Groups on Transport and Tourism in relation to passenger ferries and cruise shipping.

Another important element of the joint declaration was the decision on intensifying efforts to improve road, navigation and flight safety in the region, as well as to modernize the fleet of vehicles, vessels and aircrafts in order to reduce their harmful effects on the environment.

While focusing on the implementation of projects aimed at ensuring transport interconnectivity of the regions and transport interoperability, as well as on the introduction of intelligent transport systems, the Ministers agreed to promote harmonized information support systems in the BSEC Member States, including electronic data interchange, automatic issuance and electronic processing of transport and accompanying documents, electronic pre-declaration of cargo, development of telecommunication networks in the transport sector.

Transport is one of the priority areas of cooperation for BSEC. The Organization has two flagship projects in this sphere: the Black Sea Ring Highway project and the project on the development of the Motorways of the Sea in the BSEC region. The Black Sea Ring Highway project envisages a four-lane ring highway system, approximately 7700 km long, to connect the BSEC Member States with each other. The project on the development of the Motorways of the Sea in the BSEC region, on the other hand, is about strengthening the maritime links among the ports of the BSEC Member States. Both projects are expected to foster intra-

BSEC trade, as well as tourism, infrastructure and transport investments and economic prosperity among the countries of the Black Sea. Most importantly, they are intended to make a concrete difference in the lives of the people of the region and bring them closer together. The Memorandum of Understanding on the Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region, which went into force in 2006, was another step taken by the BSEC countries to facilitate road transport and regional trade.

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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 States[1].

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